

2021

AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY HANDBOOK

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WORKSAFE AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY

2021 HANDBOOK

Incorporating the rules and regulations of the Victorian Country Football League
as adopted by AFL Victoria Country.

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To be read in conjunction with the Laws of Australian Football and Rules of Affiliated Bodies.
Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of the Handbook for 2021.
All fair and reasonable means have been taken to ensure accuracy at the time of printing.
For all Forms, Policies and Procedures please go to the AFL Vic Country website.

Cover Photograph courtesy of Melissa Beattie from Switched on Sports

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AFL Victoria Regional Offices and staff
Country League Contacts
Umpiring Association Contacts
AFL Victoria Staff
NAB League Staff
Metropolitan Football Development Managers
Metropolitan Leagues
State Football Bodies
Netball Victoria Contacts

JUNIOR COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Be familiar with the Laws of Australian football and abide by the rules and conditions of your league and club.
2. Teach your players that rules of the game are mutual agreements which no player should evade or break.
3. Group players according to age, height, skill and physical maturity whenever possible in any competitive practice session.
4. Avoid over-playing the talented players. The 'just average' players need and deserve equal time, if not more.
5. Remember that the players involved play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it. Emphasise the importance of the learning and development of skills and positive attitudes. Never ridicule or yell at your players for making mistakes or losing a competition.
6. Ensure that equipment and facilities meets safety standards and are appropriate for the age and ability of the players.
7. The scheduling and length of practice times and competitions should take into consideration the maturity level of the player.
8. Develop team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgment of umpires and opposing coaches.
9. Follow the advice of a qualified person when determining when an injured player is ready to play or train again.
10. Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound junior coaching principles and developments. Endeavour to attain coaching accreditation and to become an active member of the local branch of the Australian Football Coaches Association.
11. Avoid use of derogatory language based on gender or race.
12. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from junior sport.
13. Promote all activities to make your clubs a child safe environment.

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH AFL COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT WHERE APPLICABLE



JUNIOR PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Abide by the rules of the game and rules set down by your coach, club and league.
2. Never argue with an official or umpire. If you disagree, have your captain, coach or manager approach the official during a break or after the competition.
3. Control your temper. Verbal or physical abuse of officials, umpires, spectators or other players, deliberately distracting or provoking an opponent is not acceptable or permitted.
4. Work equally hard for yourself and your team. Your team's performance will benefit, so will you.
5. Be a good sport. Applaud all good plays whether they be by your team, opponent or the other team. Be proud to walk off the ground after each game knowing that you have given your best effort and never involve yourself in an argument with opposing players, umpires or officials.
6. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another player. Your involvement to play is for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it.
7. Co-operate with your coach and team mates, and respect the ability of your opponent. Without them there would be no game.
8. Play for the 'fun of it' and not just to please parents and coaches.
9. Avoid use of derogatory language based on gender or race.



PARENTS AND SPECTATORS OF JUNIOR FOOTBALL CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Encourage children to participate if they are interested. However, if a child is not willing do not force them.
2. Focus upon the child's efforts and performance rather than the overall outcome of the event. This assists the child in setting realistic goals related to their ability by reducing the emphasis on winning.
3. Teach your child that honest effort is as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
4. Encourage your child always to play by the rules.
5. Never ridicule or yell at your child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
6. Remember your child should be involved in football for their enjoyment, not yours.
7. Remember your child learns best by example. Applaud good play by both your team and by members of the opposing team.
8. If you disagree with an official or umpire raise the issue through the appropriate channels rather than questioning the official's judgment and honesty in public. Remember, most officials give their time and effort for your child's involvement.
9. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from junior sporting activities.
10. Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches. They give of their time and resources to provide recreational activities for your child and deserve your support.
11. Support your club officials in maintaining the highest standard of behaviour both on and off the field for the betterment of the league and your family. Offer your assistance to the team that your child is playing in so that every opportunity is being provided for the very best supervision and support. Your involvement will give both yourself and your child far more satisfaction.
12. Avoid use of derogatory language based on gender or race.
13. Promote all activities to make your clubs a child safe environment.



SENIOR COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Be familiar with the laws of Australian football and abide by the rules and conditions of your league and club.
2. Endeavour to attain coaching accreditation and to become an active member of the local branch of the Australian Football Coaches Association.
3. Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound coaching principles and coaching developments.
4. Avoid verbal and physical confrontation with the other club's players and officials and umpires at all times – use the League's official vehicle of communication to report any unfair situations that you may believe arise.
5. Don't ask for, but rather earn the respect of your players through your dealings with them and the manner in which you perform your coaching duties.
6. Through your behaviour in the community develop personal respect to enhance the image of your club and Australian football.
7. Never swear, or use abusive language during the game or when addressing the players. Be mindful of the presence of your people and other spectators.
8. Follow the advice of a qualified person when determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
9. Treat the umpires and opposition sides with respect.
10. Be aware of the differing needs and attitudes of players at your club, particularly young players.
11. Never place the value of winning above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in players.
12. Be supportive of activities designed to encourage participation of young players at junior clubs, schools and development programs.
13. Avoid use of derogatory language based on gender or race.
14. Promote all activities to make your clubs a child safe environment.

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH AFL COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT WHERE APPLICABLE



SENIOR PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. At all times abide by the rules of the League in which you compete and the club for which you play. Rules of the game are mutual agreements which no player should evade or break.
2. Do not assault or attempt to assault an umpire, another player, officials or spectators.
3. Ensure that both on and off field behaviour is consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship. Swearing is not acceptable.
4. Do not abuse, dispute or react in an obviously provocative or disappointing manner towards an umpire.
5. Conduct yourself at a high level of personal behaviour on and off the field in such a manner so as not to bring your club or the game of Australian Football into disrepute.
6. Develop a respect for the League in which you compete, your club, team mates and opponents.
7. Be willing to be involved in local football development and promotional activities.
8. Avoid use of derogatory language based on gender or race.



SECTION 2: WORKSAFE AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY RULES AND REGULATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE	
WorkSafe AFL Victoria Country - RULES AND REGULATIONS	10
Objectives & Definitions	12
1.0 Clearances – Players	14
1.1 Player who has Previously played	14
1.2 Players Seeking Transfer	15
1.3 Penalty for playing ineligible (and/or) unregistered players	15
1.4 Clearance procedure	16
1.5 Uncontested Clearance – Junior Players	16
1.6 Block Clearances	16
1.7 Clearance appeals body	16
1.8 Effect of Refused Clearance on Playing Agreement	16
1.9 Closing date for clearances & permits	17
1.10 Time limit and issue of permit upon failure to return a clearance application(s)	17
1.11 Players Transferred in Employment	17
1.12 Players in Armed Forces	18
1.13 Permit – Underage Compassionate Permit	18
1.14 Transfer Fees – AFL Victoria Country Clubs	19
1.15 Registered Player	19
1.16 Disbanded and/or Amalgamated Club Player	19
1.17 Player of Disbanded Club and Disbanded League	19
1.18 Player of Disbanded League	19
1.19 Refused Permit or Disqualification	19
1.20 Eligibility of Suspended Player to Seek a Clearance	20
1.21 Registration of Players/Minimum Age Entry Levels	20
1.22 Signing Registration	20
1.23 Coaches	20
2.0 Permits	21
2.1 Permits to Major Leagues	21
2.2 Eight Matches	21
2.3 Rule for District & Junior Leagues	22
2.4 Endorsement	22
2.5 Transfer of Player	22
2.6 Issue of Day Permits & Teams of Clubs competing in different Competitions	22
2.7 One Match per Day	22
2.8 Day Permits – No Appeal	22
2.9 Permits for Players of Opposing Teams	22
2.10 Area Permits	23
2.11 Permits – Students Living Away from Home	24
2.12 Permits – Special Regulations relating to the VAFA	24
2.13 Special Circumstance Permit – Drought/Recess	24
2.14 Players suspended while on permit	25
3.0 Transfer of Existing Clubs/Admission of New Clubs	25

4.0 Appeals of Clubs	30
5.0 Unbecoming Conduct	33
5.1 Appointment of Investigation Officer	33
5.2 Unbecoming Conduct	34
6.0 Affiliated/Unaffiliated Clubs	36
7.0 Disciplinary Matters	36
7.1 League Independent Tribunal	36
7.2 Area Appeal Committee	37
7.3 National Age Dispensation Policy Appeals	37
7.4 Jurisdiction of League Independent Tribunal and Area Appeals Committee	37
7.5 Appeals Against Refused Clearances – Players	37
7.6 Sanction imposed by a Club – Player Appeal	40
7.7 Procedure and Evidence before League Independent Tribunal and Area Appeals Committee	40
8.0 AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board – Appeal from League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee Decision	44
8.1 AFL Victoria Country Appeals Board	44
8.2 Regulation Paramount	45
8.3 Right of Appeal	45
8.4 Notice of Appeal	45
8.5 Lodgement of Notice of Appeal	46
8.6 Time for Hearing of Appeal	46
8.7 Obligations of Appeal Board	47
8.8 Adjournment and Stay of Sanction	47
8.9 New Hearing	48
8.10 Procedure and Evidence	48
8.11 Power of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board	48
8.12 Onus of Proof	49
8.13 Standard of Proof	49
8.14 Majority Decision	49
8.15 No Reason	49
8.16 Representation	49
8.17 Questions of Law and Fact	49
8.18 Costs	49
8.19 Abandon Appeal	49
8.20 Validity of Hearing	49
8.21 Co-operation with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board	50
8.22 Exhaust Internal Appeal	50
8.23 Further Time	50
9.0 Vilification & Discrimination Policy	50
10.0 Order Off Rule	53
11.0 Set Penalties	55
12.0 Treatment of Bleeding Players	58
13.0 Finals Eligibility –NAB League & VFL Players	58
14.0 Coaching Accreditation	58
15.0 Official Club Runners/Trainers/Water Carriers	58
15.1 Eligibility	58
15.2 Duties	59

16.0 Representative Team Availability	59
17.0 Club Team Numbers – Community Championships	59
18.0 Service Awards	60
18.1 Recognition of Service Medallion	60
19.0 Percentage when a club Forfeits	60
20.0 Leagues	60
21.0 Umpires	61
21.1 Registration	61
21.2 Umpires as Players	61
21.3 Players as Umpires	61
21.4 Approaches to Umpires	61
22.0 Domestic Matters	61
23.0 Interpretations or Rulings from Region Manager	62
23.1 Questions not Provided For	62
23.2 Decisions of AFL Victoria Country Board	62
23.3 Authority – Region Manager	62
24.0 Licensing	62
25.0 Doping Policy	63
26.0 Risk Management	63
27.0 AFL Australian Football Match Policy	63
28.0 Child Safe Standards	63
29.0 Players Exceeding Permitted Number	63
30.0 Variation of Time	63
AFL NATIONAL PLAYER TRANSFER REGULATIONS	64
AFL VICTORIA AFFILIATES REGULATIONS	82
AFL VICTORIA AFFILIATE TO AFFILIATE - MOVEMENT OF CLUBS	92
AFL (NSW-ACT) / AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY AGREEMENT	98
AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY PLAYER TRANSFER AGREEMENT WITH THE VICTORIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOR MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS BETWEEN AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY & AFL, VFL AND UNDER 18 COMPETITIONS.	100
AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL PLAYER & OFFICIAL NATIONAL DEREGISTRATION POLICY	103
AFL VICTORIA PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM POLICY	112
AFL NATIONAL AGE DISPENSATION POLICY	131

OBJECTIVES AND DEFINITIONS

Objectives

AFL Victoria Country and Leagues wish to ensure that teams fielded in competitions conducted by a League are as strong and well matched as possible. The continuing support of such competitions and

the opportunity for players to develop and employ their skills both depend upon a League continuing to conduct vigorous competitions between evenly matched and financially viable clubs. In order to achieve these objectives, AFL Victoria Country has adopted these Rules and Regulations to supplement the provisions of contracts/player declarations of service between players and their clubs to provide a system that will:

- (a) ensure sufficient stability in the membership of Club teams to enable team spirit and public support to be maintained;
- (b) provide opportunities for players to enter competitions conducted by Leagues and for an orderly system for:
 - (i) players to move between Clubs; and
 - (ii) Clubs to move between Leagues;
- (c) provide Clubs with an incentive to expend time, effort and resources in a development of Australian Football.
- (d) provide Junior Leagues and Clubs with the opportunity to expand participation within all levels of underage football.

These Rules and Regulations apply to commissions affiliated to AFL Victoria Country and leagues, clubs and players linked through affiliation to these commissions.

Under these Rules and Regulations, a player or a Club is restrained in his/her or its freedom to transfer if it can be demonstrated that the restraint is necessary to achieve the objectives referred to above.

These Rules and Regulations also establish relevant bodies and a mechanism by which reportable offences and alleged conduct of persons can be referred to, heard and determined by the relevant body.

Australian Football competes with numerous other sports, not only with respect to public attendances, but also participation at a junior and senior level. At a time where athletes have numerous choices between competing sports, AFL Victoria Country and Leagues recognise that it is important to encourage such athletes to play Australian Football. This can be achieved, in part, if Australian Football is seen not only as a physical and skilfully demanding sport, but also a sport played within the Rules of game and in the spirit of true sportsmanship.

AFL Victoria Country and Leagues consider that Australian Football played within the competitions conducted by the Leagues should aspire to the game being played both competitively and fairly. It is against this background that relevant disciplinary bodies have been established and are given power to impose sanctions (such as suspension or a monetary sanction) in circumstances where the conduct of a person is in breach of rules and regulations applicable to that person or the Laws of Australian Football. AFL Victoria Country considers that the imposition of such penalties is reasonably necessary to ensure fair and responsible conduct and thereby encourage participation in Australian Football in the competitions conducted by Leagues affiliated to AFL Victoria Country.

Definitions

In these rules and regulations, unless the context requires otherwise, the following words have the following meaning:

AFL Victoria - means Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited.

AFL Victoria Country – the part of AFL Victoria which administers, manages and develops Australian Football in country and regional Victoria.

AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board – the body established by AFL Victoria Country to hear appeals from a decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee.

Aggrieved Person – any person or organisation subject to the decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, excluding umpires and witnesses.

Area – has the same meaning as “AFL Victoria Country Region” contained in the Statement of Rules of AFL Victoria Country.

Area Appeal Committee – the body established under regulation 7.2.

Area Co-ordinator – the person appointed to that position by AFL Victoria Country to assist the respective Region Manager.

Bye – That a bye shall be defined as a break in a draw

(a) That is caused by an uneven number of teams in a competition in any particular round.

(b) That is caused by a split round or suspension of a complete round of matches.

Club – a body which participates in Australian Rules competitions conducted by affiliated bodies.

Commission – body established to govern football in a designated region of Victoria; affiliated to AFL Victoria.

Days – means each day of the week save for a Saturday or Sunday, but includes public holidays.

Hours – when related to Appeals of any description does not include weekends Investigations

Officer – a person appointed by a relevant League to investigate a matter referred to him or her for investigation, who is AFL Victoria Country accredited.

Junior League or Club – An affiliated body which provides football competition at under 16 and a half (or upper age as determined by local commission) and younger age levels only.

Laws of Australian Football – the Laws of the Game as published by the Australian Football League (refer yellow section).

League - a league associated with a State Body or region Commission via an affiliation agreement League Independent.

Region Manager – the person appointed to that position by AFL Victoria Country.

Tribunal – the tribunal appointed by the relevant League in accordance with regulation 8.1.

Ordinary Member – means a member appointed as such pursuant to the Rules of AFL Victoria Country Affiliated League, Affiliated Body or League.

Regional Commission - an organisation that:

(a) is affiliated with AFL Victoria; and

(b) which the League is a member of and/or affiliated with.

1.0 CLEARANCES – PLAYERS

1.1 Player who has Previously Played:

Any player who has played football with an affiliated club at any time must obtain a clearance from the club and League with which he/she last played (as determined by the Australian Football League National Player Registration & Transfer Regulations) before playing with their new club. Any player not having played during the previous 24 calendar months is free to register with the club of his choice provided the clearance application is processed as determined by the Australian Football League National Player Registration & Transfer Regulations.

1.2 Players Seeking Transfer

In the event of a player of an AFL Victoria Country club who has transferred to a club in another AFL Victoria Country region, the metropolitan area, or, another state, returning to the AFL Victoria

Country area from which their transfer was effected, he/she shall not be regarded as bound to his/her former club and shall not be required to obtain a clearance from such club before being eligible to play with another club in AFL Victoria Country, subject to compliance with National Player Transfer Regulations. In the event of a player of an AFL Victoria Country club who has transferred to a club of another league within the same AFL Victoria Country Area wishing to transfer to another club of the league from which they were cleared he/she shall not be regarded as bound to the club from which they were cleared and shall not be required to obtain a clearance from such club before being eligible to play with another club in his/her former league subject to compliance with National Player Transfer Regulations.

Note:(a) Refer specific relevant clauses of agreements with the V.F.L., AFL Victoria and V.A.F.A.

1.3 Penalty for playing ineligible (and)/or unregistered players:

Any player registered with a club in the previous 24 months and not transferred to another club will be deemed to be registered to that club in the event of them playing a match without a current registration for that season. Notwithstanding the previous paragraph a player is required to register / re-register for each new season. Local league laws are to be established as they see fit for the completion of registration / re-registration for the eligibility of a player participating in a match. In the event that the League Secretary substantiates that any AFL Victoria Country registered player, playing with any club affiliated or unaffiliated with AFL Victoria Country, without having first been granted the necessary registration, clearance and/ or permit to play, required under these Rules, and is therefore deemed ineligible and unregistered, shall be deemed to be ineligible. The AFL Victoria Country club with which the player concerned played shall provide a written submission outlining reasons behind the misdemeanour and forward such submission to the League Manager who in turn will address the matter with the Region Manager and the club then be subject to:

(a) If the Senior Club wins the game:

- (i) fine not less than \$500,
- (ii) reversal of match points,
- (iii) loss of all points For pertaining to that game,
- (iv) and may be subject to further penalty as determined by the League

(b) If the Senior Club loses the game

- (i) fine not less than \$500,
- (ii) loss of all points For pertaining to that game,
- (iii) and may be subject to such penalty as determined by the League

(c) If the Junior Club wins the game:

- (i) fine not greater than \$250,
- (ii) reversal of match points,
- (iii) loss of all points For pertaining to the game, and
- (iv) may be subject to further penalty as determined by the League

(d) If the Junior Club loses the game

- (i) fine not greater than \$250
- (ii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game, and
- (iii) may be subject to such further penalty as determined by the League.

If a club wishes to appeal any penalty applied under regulation 1.3 this appeal will be to the AFL Regional Commission according to its own constitution.

1.4 Clearance procedure:

Each clearance application shall be signed in his own handwriting by the applicant player and if such player be under the age of eighteen (18) years the clearance application shall be endorsed by the player's parent or guardian and lodged with the Club with which he/she desires to play; the club / league shall forthwith date the application and enter into the IT system. Destination club must keep a record of the original application signed by the player. If requested destination club must produce to their league a copy of the original application by no later than 5.00pm next business day following such request. The Former club has six (6) Business Days, commencing from when the application to Transfer is lodged through AFL Footyweb, to object the Transfer application. If the Former Club does not object within six (6) Business Days (or if the Former Club approves the Transfer within six (6) Business Days), the transfer will be automatically approved and finalised.

Once a player's application for a clearance and/or registration has been granted:–

(a) the player shall become eligible to register with the Club to whom he/she has sought the clearance registration; and

(b) the League in which the Club plays shall register the player as a player of that Club and allow him/ her to play.

A player whose application for a clearance has been lodged, as provided for under these rules, shall not be permitted to lodge an application to play with another club until finality has been reached regarding his/her original application.

Leagues may not impose a 'cut off' time for the handling of clearances prior to 6.00pm on the Friday before a round of matches.

1.5 Uncontested Clearance – Junior Players

A registered player of an affiliated junior league/ association shall be cleared to the club of his/her choice after the 1st day of February in the year next following that in which he/she became ineligible by virtue of age, to continue as a registered player of that junior league/association and this clearance may be granted at any time during the season.

If, in the opinion of the respective Region Manager with which such junior league/association is affiliated, the clearance is unreasonably withheld, the Region Manager shall be empowered to grant the necessary permit to allow the Player concerned to play with the club of his choice.

1.6 Block clearances:

In the event of a transfer of a club to another League, all registered players shall automatically be transferred with such Club to the new League. The Appointed League Official from which the club is transferring shall supply a certified list of all registered players of the club concerned to the club's new League.

1.7 Clearance appeals body:

A Player who is refused a clearance to transfer from his/her current Club may lodge an appeal in accordance with regulation 7.5.

1.8 Effect of Refused Clearance on Playing Agreement:

Any agreement between a Player and the Club with which he/she desires to play will terminate in the event that the Player is unsuccessful in obtaining a clearance from the Club and League with which he/ she last played.

A Player is "unsuccessful in obtaining a clearance" if following the refusal by the Club and League with which he/she last played, the Player appeals to the Area Appeal Board or subsequently to the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board and the Players appeal is unsuccessful.

Where the agreement between a Player and the Club with which he/she desires to play is terminated by virtue of this regulation, the Player shall reimburse or repay to the Club any prior payment, consideration, advantage or benefit given, provided or applied pursuant to the agreement and subject thereto, each party will be released from all obligations under the agreement.

1.9 Closing date for clearances and permits:

Except for clearances as provided for in Reg. 1.1 and 1.2 and as herein after provided, all applications for clearances must be lodged with the Appointed League Official of the club with which the player wishes to play between 1st November - 30th November and 1st February - 30th June in each year. Any applications lodged after 30th June shall be invalid and not considered. All applications for clearances lodged on or before the 30th June shall be finalised by the clearing League not later than the 21st July and forwarded to reach the Appointed League Official to which the player desires to be cleared, not later than the 31st July, otherwise the clearance shall lapse. Permits to play will not be granted to players transferring from interstate where the transfer notification is received by the relevant Appointed League Official after 30th June in any year.

(i) Junior Permits within Victoria can be applied for after 1st July providing that there exists a current interchange agreement between the two Leagues involved in the interchange. If a player has not played in the previous 24 months and wishes to register he/she can do so at any time during the year and is not bound by the June 30 cut-off. If the player has played in the previous 24 months he/she requires a clearance and is then subject to AFL Victoria Country Rule 1.9.

1.10 Time limit and issue of permit upon failure to return a clearance application

1.10.1 As of the 1st November until 30th November and 1st February through until 30th June each year, a clearance application lodged by a player or coach of any team, if for any reason the clearance application is not endorsed and received within (6) clear business days from the date of its dispatch by the League to which the player is desirous of transferring the following procedure shall apply; Refer National Player Transfer Regulations.

1.10.2

Clearance applications submitted electronically must contain the following information:-

- Players Name,
- Address,
- Date of Birth,
- Player Registration number,
- Club the player desires to be cleared from and its Affiliated League,
- Club the player desires to be registered with and its Affiliated League.

1.11 Players Transferred in Employment:

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere appearing in these Regulations, in the event of a player who has been in the service of their employer for three consecutive months immediately preceding their transfer, being transferred by their employer after the 1st July to another branch of the same employers business within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated area they shall be entitled to make application for a clearance and permit to play with a League in the Area to which they have been transferred at any time after the 1st July, provided that such transfer is completed in time to permit the player playing at least one competition match, with a club in the League to which he is being transferred, prior to the first final match of that League. Provided further that where such League

prescribes its own domestic residential or a minimum number of qualifying matches in excess of one for a player to participate in Finals matches, such domestic rules shall take precedence.

The child of a person who is transferred in employment under the above condition is eligible to make application for a clearance and/or permit after the 1st July to play in the region to which his parent(s) is transferred or a contiguous region.

This Regulation is effective only for players transferred after 1st July in each season and a player on temporary transfer being re-transferred by their employer to a branch in another region or back to their original branch, shall receive an immediate clearance and permit to play in such region or with their original club, as the case may be. Such clearance to be made available to the player by the club with whom he/she is then registered and any such player shall not be required to fulfill domestic residential qualifications.

Players as defined above are subject to National Player Transfer Regulations.

1.12 Players in Armed Forces:

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere appearing in these regulations, a player engaged in the Armed Forces, including a National Service Trainee, transferred in the course of their duties, shall be entitled to receive a clearance and permit to play with a league in the region to which he/she is transferred, any time after the 1st July provided that such transfer is made and completed in time to permit his/her playing of at least one competition match with a club in the League to which he/she is being transferred prior to the first finals match of that body.

The player shall be eligible to play with his/her former club at any time during the currency of the season, including finals and be not subject to domestic rules, in respect of eligibility for finals. In the case of a member of the Armed Forces, including a National Service Trainee, such player shall automatically revert to their former League and club immediately upon termination of their Service duties.

1.13 Permit – Under Age Compassionate Permit

(a) In the event of a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition being required to move residence for compassionate reasons from one Region Commission Area to another Region Commission Area after 1st July, he/she shall be eligible to make application to his/her club for a clearance and, subject to the satisfaction of the Region Manager concerning the compassionate reasons, receive a permit to play from the respective Region Manager to which he/she transfers, providing that in the season of receiving a permit under this rule, the player shall only be permitted to play in under age grades or competitions.

(b) Where a player under the age of 16 years as at the 1st of January in a given year and is in a situation where the parents have separated and have special custody arrangements such players may be eligible to apply for a permit to play at a second or alternate club which is more than 150km away from their original club or upon approval of the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager.

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend. Permits will not be granted where a local Area Agreement can be applied.

The ultimate verification and approval of this special Family Permit will rest with the respective Region Manager after lodgement of the Family Permit Form and proof of separation and residence of both parents.

Family Permits cannot be applied for or approved after June 30th in each year and is only applicable for that year.

1.14 Transfer Fees – AFL Victoria Country Clubs:

No AFL Victoria Country club shall offer, pay, demand or receive a transfer fee for a player transferring between two AFL Victoria Country clubs. No AFL Victoria Country club shall offer, pay, demand or receive a transfer fee for players transferring between a VFL and AFL Victoria Country club and an AFL Victoria Affiliated club and an AFL Victoria Country club. In the event of an AFL Victoria Country club or clubs being found in breach of this rule the matter shall be referred to the Area Appeals Board for adjudication and if necessary penalty.

The Area Appeals Board shall determine any penalty which may include the following:

- 1) a substantial fine
- 2) such penalty as is determined by the Area Appeals Board.

1.15 Registered Player:

A player who is registered with a Club may only play with another Club if:–

- (a) they have obtained a clearance to and become registered with another Club in accordance with these Regulations; or
- (b) they are otherwise ‘permitted’ to play for another Club under these Regulations.

1.16 Disbanded and/or Amalgamated Club Player:

If a player’s club has disbanded the player must obtain a clearance from his/her club’s league. Where a player’s club amalgamates with another club, or clubs, the player shall automatically become attached to the combined club.

1.17 Player of Disbanded League:

If a player’s League has disbanded, the player must obtain a clearance from his/her club and its Region Manager.

1.18 Player of Disbanded Club and Disbanded League:

If a player’s club and League have disbanded the player must obtain a clearance from his/her Region Manager.

1.19 Refused Permit or Disqualification

- (a) Any person who has been refused a permit to play or has been disqualified shall not be allowed to hold any position whatever in connection with any club until such permit be granted or the period of disqualification has expired or is removed by the body imposing the disqualification.
- (b) A player acting as coach to his/her club at the time of any disqualification for a field offence shall not be debarred from performing duties as coach to that club during the period of his/her disqualification.
- (c) Non-playing coaches found guilty of an offence and disqualified shall not be permitted to undertake coaching duties or hold any position in conjunction with any club during the period of disqualification. In the event that the nonplaying coach is a player with the club in another grade, and he/she is reported for an offence as a player and suspended as a result of such report, such suspension shall not prevent him/her from participating as a non-playing coach in the other grade.

1.20 Eligibility of Suspended Player to Seek a Clearance/Providing False Information:

(a) A player under suspension by their league's tribunal shall be eligible to apply for a clearance, however such player cannot be eligible for competition matches until the period of suspension has expired or such suspension has been removed by the authority imposing the suspension. However, where an AFL Victoria Country player's suspension expires after the closing date for clearances and such player seeks a clearance, the clearance may be granted after expiration of the suspension provided such clearance has been lodged prior to the closing date for the clearances (as per rule 1.9) and is endorsed by the appropriate Region Manager. A person seeking registration or a transfer from one club or league to another shall not falsely or recklessly furnish false information to a club, league or relevant tribunal, if found to have done so the relevant Commission shall deal with the player and the Club as it deems fit.

1.21 Registration of Players / Minimum Age Entry Levels

- (a) Each League shall adopt and use the National Player Transfer System. Where a player has not attained the age of eighteen (18) years the registration must be acknowledged by a parent or guardian or a person authorised in writing by a parent or guardian so to act. The player transfer cannot be acknowledged by a club official unless they are a parent or guardian of the player.
- (b) Each player shall pay a registration fee annually as determined by AFL Victoria Country.
- (c) to be eligible to be registered players must have obtained seven (7) years of age at April 30th in the year of competition. Leagues can apply higher minimum ages of registration when competition ages are higher than Under 10 years of age.
- (d) A person seeking registration or transfer from one club or league to another shall not knowingly or recklessly furnish false information to a club or league or relevant tribunal, if found to have done so the relevant Football Body shall deal with the player and the Club as it deems fit.

1.22 Signing Registration:

- (a) Where a player intends to play football for a Club for the first time or, having played for another Club intends to re-commence playing for a Club for which they have previously played, then before commencing or recommencing with such Club, the player must:-
- (i) complete, sign and lodge a current "AFL Victoria Country Clearance/Registration Form" and
 - (ii) become registered with that Club.
- (b) Regulation 1.22 does not apply to a player who is required to obtain a day permit or area permit in accordance with these regulations.
- (c) Players are permitted to be registered at one club only at any one time.

1.23 Coaches:

Any person or player desirous of coaching (playing or non-playing) any team must comply with the regulations governing the transfer of players and upon receiving such permit to coach, shall also be eligible to play. This rule does not apply to registered players in an open age competition acting as non-playing coach to a team in an under age competition.

2.0 PERMITS

2.1 Permits to Major Leagues:

Affiliated Leagues in an Area shall be required by the respective Leagues, detailed in Statement of

AFL Victoria Country Rules and Purposes to adopt a provision permitting any player of a District or Junior League to play with a club in a Major League provided the player resides within the radius of such Major League club (with the exception of Junior League players playing within a current interchange agreement between leagues), without a clearance, for not more than eight matches in any one season.

Provided that before each such match, the player shall obtain permission electronically through Footyweb from their parent club using a type two (2) permit.

All such permits (type 2 permits) shall be filed by the respective Officials and retained for production whenever required.

Any player having in any one season played eight matches under the provisions of this rule, and desiring to continue to play with a Major League club, shall only be permitted to do so upon applying for and receiving a clearance and permit from their club and League in the usual manner or where such is refused upon an appeal being lodged and upheld.

This clearance may be granted at any time during the current season.

In the case where a registered player of a club of a District League is not within the specific radius of any Major League he/she shall be entitled to apply for a day permit to any club in the Major League nearest to his/her own residence.

Players from District and Junior Leagues who are playing on permits in Major Leagues and are reported for a field offence shall have the charge heard by the Major League tribunal which in the event of finding the player guilty shall determine the penalty which shall then apply to matches of the club in the grade of competition where the offence occurred. The suspended player is not eligible to resume with their District League club until his/ her penalty (matches suspended for) has been completed by the Major League club where the offence occurred.

2.2 Eight Matches:

This provision shall be restricted to a maximum of eight matches with a Major League club (with the exception of Junior League players playing within a current interchange agreement between leagues), in any one season, but such eight matches need not necessarily be with the same club of a Major League provided that any player having played under permit with one Major League club and desiring to play with another Major League club must, in addition to having the written permission of their parent club, also obtain the written consent of the Major League club with which they have previously played under permit and such club shall thereupon cease to have any jurisdiction over such player.

Any player seeking a permit to play in a Major League with which such player has been registered in the past 24 months requires such permit to be endorsed by the club in the Major League with which the player played in the previous 24 months.

2.3 Rule for District and Junior Leagues:

It shall be obligatory upon any District and Junior League to insert in its rules the provision laid down in this regulation, but no player can play with a Major League unless their parent club shall first grant him the necessary permit required under the provision of this regulation (type 2 permit).

2.4 Endorsement:

A day permit granted pursuant to this Regulation to provide for even teams shall not require any endorsement or approval by the League of the club granting the permit (type 1 permit).

2.5 Transfer of Player:

Any player having played on permit under the provisions of this regulation and desiring to transfer from their parent club to another Major League club in the same League must also have their clearance approved by the last Major League club with which they played in that League under permit, but the right of such Major League club to endorse the clearance shall not extend beyond the season during which the last permit to play with such Major League club was granted.

2.6 Issue of Day Permits & Teams of Clubs competing in different Competitions:

One day permits shall be restricted to the Commission area concerned.

A Major League may limit the use of incoming day permits issued pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 2.1 and 2.2 as that Major League may deem fit.

For the purpose of interpretation of Regulations 2.1 to 2.7, a Major League shall be deemed to be the first eighteens only of the clubs comprising such Major League.

Any player who is older than under 16 and a half who is a member of a team which is affiliated with a Senior club, wherein the player participates in a different competition to that of the Senior club, may play with the Senior club, without the need to obtain a matchday permit.

2.7 One Match per Day:

(i) A player shall not be permitted to play with a District or Junior League club and a Major League club on a one-day permit on the same day.

(ii) Players are allowed to play with a VFL senior team or the NAB League Competition on the one day. Players may only do so when the VFL senior team player or NAB League Competition player has played less than twenty five minutes of actual playing time and has been granted a medical clearance from the VFL or NAB League club, then they may return to play with their AFL Victoria Country club on the same weekend.

2.8 Day Permits – No Appeal:

There is no right of appeal against the refusal to grant a day permit.

2.9 Permits for Players of Opposing Teams:

Affiliated Leagues may approve the granting of a day permit to reserve grade and under-age players to play with the players opposing Reserve grade team or under-age competition team where the opposing team does not have the required number of players for that match. (These permits are to be entered as type 1 permits within Footyweb.)

Where a Senior grade team does not have the required number of players for a match and requires extra players from an opposition team the Affiliated League may apply to the relevant Region Manager, for approval to grant requested day permits.

Affiliated Leagues approving the granting of such permits must obtain from their Region Manager, approval for the system under which the League will grant day permits for players to play with the opposing clubs.

2.10 Area Permits:

(a) Notwithstanding anything contained in these Regulations requiring the production of a clearance by a player, Leagues of an area and Leagues in adjacent areas may enter into written agreements to allow an interchange of players to meet local conditions, provided however that the provision of Regulation 2.1 (Permits to Major Leagues) must in all cases be strictly complied with when a registered player of a District or Junior League club desires to play with a club in a Major League. Permission may be granted for Areas to enter into written agreements to permit the transfer of players from District and Junior Leagues for the purpose of interpretation of this Regulation. The written agreements must be submitted to, and approved by, the respective Region Manager concerned before the agreements become operative.

The respective Region Managers shall be empowered to approve agreements to operate between Affiliated AFL Victoria Country Leagues including under age competitions for the interchange of players between the competitions.

(b) A registered player of an affiliated club who is an age which permits them to play in an underage competition up to and including under 15 years of age shall be required to obtain a permit from their club to play with a club or competition other than an Under age grade of their league. Such permission may be granted at any time during the season and may be granted subject only to the conditions of an Area Agreement between the relevant leagues.

(c) Area Agreements shall operate under the following conditions:

An Agreement between the Football League and the Football League for the Season.

This agreement is signed pursuant to AFL Victoria Country rules and regulations pertaining to clearances and permits and in particular the Clause 2.10 – Area Permits, whereby an interchange of players between clubs of the abovementioned Leagues may take place without clearance or permits and is subject to any provisions contained within this agreement.

(d) As per the AFL National Player Registration & Transfer Regulations, Area Agreements / Interchange Agreements are ongoing from year to year unless revoked by one of the football bodies party to the agreement by advising AFL Victoria.

PROVIDED HOWEVER:

(i) That this Agreement is in force for the current season only.

(ii) That the player(s) concerned are acquainted with AFL Victoria Country regulations 2.1 and 2.5 regarding one day permits to Major Leagues and eight (8) matches.

(iii) Prior to each match the player shall obtain permission electronically from their parent club using a type two (2) permit. The permit, similar to a one day permit form and dispersed as required under Regulation 2.1 of AFL Victoria Country Rules and Regulations.

(iv) Players of any club having a bye will not be allowed to play with another club on that day, unless he/she has previously played with that club in the current season under this agreement. The club playing the player from the other League shall show his/her registered club on the match team sheet. Players of third 18 teams of Senior Grade competitions are not to be classified as players of Junior age competitions.

(v) A local interchange agreement can override clause (iv) to restrict junior players playing on permit when their club has a bye.

(vi) That this agreement cannot be altered unless agreed to by the Region Manager.

(vii) That in order for a player playing under such Area Permit to participate in a finals series in that season the player must have played a minimum of five (5) games in the team of the grade in which

he/she has been selected to play in the finals and has met any additional league eligibility requirements.

2.11 Permits – Students Living Away from Home

(i) A player resident away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being cleared to his/ her current club from the respective Region Manager where such former club is located. If required by the respective Region Manager, the player shall supply documentary evidence of his/her attendance at the said college, institute or university.

(ii) In order for a student playing under such permit to participate in a finals series in that season a student must have played a minimum of 5 games in the team of the grade in which they are selected to play in the finals and met any other local finals requirements.

2.12 Permits – Special Regulations relating to the VAFA

Permit for any player using this agreement must be in place prior to July 1st. Refer to online VAFA agreement on the AFL Vic Country website under Community Football.

2.13 Special Circumstance Permit – Drought/Recess

Temporary Permits in Drought Affected Leagues Affiliated Clubs in Drought effected Leagues, as determined by AFL Victoria Country, where their season will be delayed (unable to begin on their scheduled starting date as previously fixtured) shall be required to adopt a provision permitting any player of a Major or District League to play with a club in another League without a clearance for not more than eight matches in any one season provided that before each such match(es) he/ she shall obtain permission in writing from his/her parent club so to play.

This written permission may be for one or two weeks at a time only Permits cannot be issued for players to represent multiple clubs.

Any player having in any one season played eight matches under the provisions of this rule, and desiring to continue to play with the League club, shall only be permitted to do so upon applying for and receiving a clearance from their club and League in the usual manner or where such is refused upon an appeal being lodged and upheld. This clearance must be applied for prior to July 1. Once the registered club's season begins all existing permits cease to exist in each case.

Players who are playing on permits in other Leagues and are reported for a field offence shall have the charge heard by the League tribunal in which the alleged offence occurs which in the event of finding the player guilty shall determine the penalty which shall then apply to matches of the club in the grade of competition where the offence occurred. Players are unable to play for any team if suspended.

Temporary Permits for Players of Clubs in recess

Leagues who have clubs who go into recess, as determined by AFL Victoria Country, shall be required to adopt a provision permitting any player of a Major or District League to play with a club in another League without a clearance for not more than one season provided that before or during the season he/ she shall obtain permission in writing from his parent club/league so to play.

All such permits shall be filed as a Type 2 Permit by the respective Secretaries and retained for production whenever required. Permits cannot be issued for players to represent multiple clubs. Any player having played under the provisions of this rule, and desiring to continue to play with the League club, shall only be permitted to do so upon applying for and receiving a clearance from their club and League in the usual manner or where such is refused upon an appeal being lodged and upheld. This clearance must be applied for prior to July 1.

Once the registered club comes out of recess all existing permits cease to exist in each case.

2.14 Players suspended while on permit

Players who are playing on permits in other Leagues and are reported for a field offence shall have the charge heard by the League tribunal in which the alleged offence occurs which in the event of finding the player guilty shall determine the penalty which shall then apply to matches of the club in the grade of competition where the offence occurred. Players are unable to play for any team if suspended.

3.0 CLUBS/ADMISSION OF NEW CLUBS

For rules 3.0 and 4.0 Secretary read also as AFL Victoria Community Football Manager.

General 3.1

For the purposes of Regulations 3 and 4, a decision of the Board means a decision of AFL Victoria, or a decision of the Commission means a decision of an AFL Regional Commission Any alterations to regulations 3 and 4 by Commission can only occur after approval from AFL Victoria.

New Clubs 3.2

An Affiliated League may only:-

- (a) admit a newly formed club as a member or the representatives of such a club as members of the Affiliated League; or
- (b) include a newly formed club in the Affiliated League's fixture of matches to be played in its football season; or
- (c) permit a newly formed club to participate, compete or take part in any football match played under the authority, control or direction of the Affiliated League. Where it has first sought and obtained the written consent of the AFL Regional Commission.

3.3

- (a) Where an Affiliated League proposes to permit or admit a newly formed club or Umpire Group under Regulation 3.2, it shall lodge an application in writing with the Region Manager during the period commencing on 1 August and ending on 30 November in each year.
- (b) The AFL Regional Commission shall as soon as practicable grant or refuse the application and notify the Affiliated League of its decision in writing.
- (c) A decision of the AFL Regional Commission to refuse an application does not take effect unless at a meeting held in accordance with Regulation 3.4, the AFL Regional Commission confirms the decision.

3.4

A meeting of the AFL Regional Commission to confirm or revoke its decision to refuse an application

must be held not earlier than seven (7) days and not later than twenty eight (28) days after notice has been given to the Affiliated League in accordance with Regulation 3.5.

3.5

For the purposes of giving notice in accordance with Regulation 3.4, the Region Manager shall, as soon as practicable, give written notice to the Affiliated League:–

- (a) advising of the AFL Regional Commission decision to refuse the application;
- (b) stating the date, place and time of the meeting at which the Affiliated League may address the AFL Regional Commission; and
- (c) informing the Affiliated League that it may do the following:–
 - (i) attend the meeting; and
 - (ii) give to the AFL Regional Commission before the date of the meeting, written submissions in support of a revocation of the Commission’s decision.

3.6

(a) At a meeting of the AFL Regional Commission to confirm or revoke a decision to refuse an application under Regulation 3.3(b), the Commission:–

- (i) shall provide the Affiliated League an opportunity to be heard;
- (ii) shall hear and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner;
- (iii) is not bound by the rules of evidence or practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit;
- (iv) may regulate the proceedings before it in such manner as it thinks fit; and
- (v) shall determine by ordinary resolution whether to confirm or revoke the decision.

(b) The AFL Regional Commission shall not be obliged to give reasons for confirming or revoking its decision to refuse an application under Regulation 3.3(b).

3.7 Existing or Amalgamated Clubs

3.7.1 Unless Regulation 3.17 applies an Affiliated League shall not:–

- (a) admit an existing or amalgamated club as a member or the representatives of such a club as members of the Affiliated League; or
- (b) include an existing or amalgamated club (or an under age club) in the Affiliated League’s fixture of matches to be played in its football season; or
- (c) permit an existing or amalgamated club to participate, compete or take part in any football match played under the authority, control or direction of the Affiliated League, until:–
 - (i) the existing or amalgamated club has obtained the written consent of the immediate past Affiliated League with whom the existing or amalgamated club was affiliated (“the Governing Affiliated League”); and
 - (ii) the decision by the Governing Affiliated League to give its consent is approved by the AFL Regional Commission (each AFL Regional Commission if the club is changing regions) pursuant to Regulation 3.11; or
 - (iii) the AFL Victoria allows an appeal made by the existing or amalgamated club under Regulation 4.2

3.7.2 Negotiations with clubs/leagues:–

- (a) An Affiliated League or Club shall not engage in negotiations with another league or club without first notifying the Region Manager of their intentions.

In the event that the Region Manager is not notified in writing of their intention to approach, discuss or negotiate a potential move of an affiliated club from an existing league, the matter will be

referred to the AFL Regional Commission for determination or action should the breach of this rule be proven. Unless Regulation 3.17 applies or the AFL Victoria Community Football Manager otherwise allows (at his or her absolute discretion), a Club/League seeking permission to negotiate with an AFL Victoria Country Affiliated Club/League, in relation to a transfer, must apply to the Region Manager for such permission prior to July 31st and the club seeking the transfer must apply for a transfer from the Governing Affiliated League prior to October 31 in the same year.

(b) Upon receipt of such notice by the club or league the Region Manager shall notify the parties involved of his approval or otherwise for the club and or league to approach, discuss or negotiate any potential club movement.

(c) Unless Regulation 3.17 applies or AFL Victoria Community Football Manager otherwise allows (at his or her absolute discretion), if an approach, discussion or negotiations in any given year fail to result in the movement of a club to a new league, any further application to approach, discussion or negotiations may not take place for a period of two years.

3.8 (i) Transfer of Club within the same AFL Regional Commission

(a) An existing or amalgamated club proposing to:-

- (i) transfer wholly to another Affiliated League; or
- (ii) transfer an under age team or teams to another Affiliated League within the same AFL Regional Commission, shall lodge an application (“Transfer Application”) in writing with the Governing Affiliated League and the AFL Regional Commission within the time specified in Regulation 3.8(b).

(b) A Transfer Application relating to the transfer of:-

- (i) the whole club shall be made during the period commencing on August 1 and ending on October 31 in each year; Permission granted by an Region Manager ceases to take effect if an application is not lodged within the timeframe (3.8 b) i) or is unsuccessful by either being denied by the Governing Affiliated League and the decision not appealed or appealed but the appeal denied by the AFL Regional Commission. The right to seek future permission is restricted in relation to the above – please refer Rule 3.7.2 c). or
- (ii) an under age club shall be made during the period commencing on 1 August and ending on 31 March in the following year.

A transfer of an under age club or teams after 31 October, and within the time limit specified, may only take place where a club has the prior written consent of both Affiliated Leagues involved in the transfer of the club.

(c) Regulation 3.8(i) does not apply in respect of any application by an existing club under Regulation 3.17.

3.8 (ii) Transfer of Club into another AFL Regional Commission

(a) An existing or amalgamated club proposing to:-

- (i) transfer wholly to another Affiliated League; or
- (ii) transfer an underage team or teams to another Affiliated League within another AFL Regional Commission, shall lodge an application (“Transfer Application”) in writing with the Governing Affiliated League and the governing AFL Regional Commission within the time specified in Regulation 3.8(b).

(b) A Transfer Application relating to the transfer of:-

(i) the whole club shall be made during the period commencing on August 1 and ending on October 31 in each year;

(ii) Permission granted by the Region Manager ceases to take effect if an application is not lodged within the timeframe (3.8 b) i) or is unsuccessful by either being denied by the Governing Affiliated League and the decision not appealed or appealed but the appeal denied by an AFL Victoria panel consisting of members of the current governing AFL Regional Commission, proposed new AFL Regional Commission and AFL Victoria according to the procedures outlined in regulation 4. The right to seek future permission is restricted in relation to the above – please refer Rule 3.7.2 c). or

(ii) an under age club transfer shall be made during the period commencing on 1 August and ending on 31 March in the following year. A transfer of an under age club or teams after 31 October, and within the time limit specified, may only take place where a club has the prior written consent of both Affiliated Leagues and AFL Regional Commission involved in the transfer of the club.

3.9 The Transfer Application shall:-

- (a) state the Affiliated League to whom the club or under age team of the club proposes to transfer;
- (b) contain full and detailed particulars in support of the existing or amalgamated club's application;
- (c) be accompanied by the signed minutes of the existing or amalgamated club's meeting at which the existing or amalgamated club's members resolved to transfer from the Governing Affiliated League; and
- (d) be signed by a majority of Executive members of the existing or amalgamated club.

3.10 Other than where Regulation 3.17 applies, within twenty-one (21) days of receiving a Transfer Application, the Governing Affiliated League shall:-

- (a) notify the existing or amalgamated club in writing whether it has consented to or refused the Transfer Application; and
- (b) where it refuses the Transfer Application, provide written reasons to the existing or amalgamated club.

3.11 Upon the Governing Affiliated League notifying the existing or amalgamated club of its decision under Regulation 3.10, the following provisions shall apply:-

(a) where the Governing Affiliated League consents to the Transfer Application:-

- (i) the Governing Affiliated League shall immediately lodge the Transfer Application and evidence of its consent with the AFL Regional Commission;
- (ii) the AFL Regional Commission shall as soon as practicable, approve or reverse the decision of the Governing Affiliated League; and
- (iii) the Region Manager shall notify all affected parties of the AFL Regional Commission's decision to approve, vary or reverse the decision of the Governing Affiliated League.

(b) where an Affiliated League refuses the Transfer Application, and both the Governing Affiliated League and Affiliated League are members of the one AFL Regional Commission the existing or amalgamated club may appeal to the AFL Region Commission in accordance with Regulation 4.

(c) where an Affiliated League refuses the Transfer Application, and the Governing Affiliated League and Affiliated League are members of different Commissions the existing or amalgamated club may appeal to the AFL Victoria Country in accordance with regulation 4. AFL Victoria will establish a panel

as it sees fit.

(d) where the current affiliated League refuses the transfer application and both the current affiliated league and the Regional Commission are the one body, the existing or amalgamated club may appeal to the Regional Commission in accordance with Regulation 4 with the Regional Commission to establish an independent panel who are not members of the Regional Commission to hear the appeal as they see fit.

3.12

(a) Where an Affiliated League does not notify an existing or amalgamated club of its decision within twenty one (21) days of receiving a Transfer Application under Regulation 3.10 or 3.17, then upon application by the existing or amalgamated club, the AFL Regional Commission may:-

- (i) approve or refuse the Transfer Application; or
- (ii) make such other determination as it in its absolute discretion thinks fit.

(b) For the purposes of Regulation 3.12(a):-

- (i) an application by an existing or amalgamated club is made by lodging a copy of the Transfer Application with the Region Manager; and
- (ii) once the Transfer Application is lodged with the Region Manager, an Affiliated League is unable to approve or refuse the Transfer Application.

3.13 An existing or amalgamated club desiring to transfer, to a league affiliated to a controlling body other than AFL Victoria Country, shall obtain approval to transfer in accordance with the terms of the agreement between AFL Victoria Country and the controlling body.

N.B. Refer to AFL Victoria Regulations relating to club transfers.

3.14 An existing or amalgamated club may only lodge one (1) Transfer Application in each year.

3.15 Transfer of a League to another AFL Regional Commission

Unless Regulation 3.17 applies, a league which desires to transfer to another AFL Regional Commission shall lodge a written application with its current Region Manager and a deposit of \$1,000. The application must be lodged prior to 31 October in the year preceding the year in which the transfer will take effect if granted. The application for transfer will be forwarded by the Region Manager within nine (9) days of receipt to the Country Football Manager and shall be dealt with within a period of thirty (30) days by AFL Victoria.

Prior to convening a meeting of an AFL Victoria panel, the applicant league and the two affected AFL Regional Commissions shall tender written submissions to AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager outlining the facts, reasons and arguments concerned in such application. The application must be lodged with AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager within nine (9) days of the date of receipt by the Region Manager. The deposit may be forfeited either in whole or part, if in the opinion of the AFL Appeals Panel the application is considered frivolous.

3.16 (1) – Expulsion (or fining) of an affiliated Club by an affiliated League, due to inadequate player numbers.

AFL Victoria Country affiliated leagues electing to fine or expel a member club of their league on the grounds of an inability to field a side(s) (other than the first senior team) must;

a) in the case of a fine – consult with AFL Victoria Country Region Manager of the AFL Regional Commission they are affiliated with.

b) in the case of expulsion of a club – consult with AFL Regional Commission they are affiliated with. In either case a hearing could be held by the AFL Regional Commission. The matter to be heard in accordance with AFL Victoria Country Rules and Regulations (refer AFL Victoria Country Rules 4.4 and 4.5 for procedures relating to the Appeal).

3.16 (2) – Expulsion or suspension of an Affiliated Club by an Affiliated League, for whatever reason, other than inadequate player numbers; apply as per b) above.

3.17 Transfer of existing clubs where an Affiliated League ceases to operate or is winding up

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules and Regulations or any determination of a Regional Commission or AFL Victoria Appeals Panel, if an Affiliated League ceases to operate, disbands or commences the formal process to disband or wind up, the existing clubs of such Affiliated League shall be entitled to apply to transfer to another Affiliated League(s) either in the same AFL Regional Commission or another AFL Regional Commission.

(b) An application to transfer under Regulation 3.17(a) shall be in the form specified in Regulation 3.9 save that the application does not have to comply with Regulation 3.9(c).

(c) Within twenty-one (21) days of receiving an application to transfer under Regulation 3.17(a) the proposed relevant Affiliated League shall: (i) notify the relevant existing club in writing whether it has consented to or refused the transfer application; and (ii) where the proposed Affiliated League refuses the transfer application, provide written reasons for its decision to the existing club.

(d) Where the proposed relevant Affiliated League refuses the transfer application under Regulation 3.17(a), the existing club may appeal to that decision to AFL Victoria Country in accordance with Regulation 4.

(e) Where the relevant Affiliated League consents to the transfer application under Regulation 3.17(a) the relevant Affiliated League must promptly notify the Regional Commission of its decision to approve the transfer application. The Regional Commission shall, as soon as practicable, approve or reject the decision of the relevant Affiliated League to approve the transfer application, and notify all relevant parties of its decision. Where the Regional Commission rejects the transfer application under Regulation 3.17(a), the existing club may appeal the decision under Regulation in accordance with Regulation 4.

4.0 APPEALS OF CLUBS

4.1

For the purposes of this regulation the Appeal Board where indicated as AFL Victoria Country shall be the AFL Victoria panel as it sees fit. Where indicated it shall be the AFL Regional Commission to which the club is affiliated.

4.2 (i)

(a) An existing or amalgamated club may appeal to the AFL Regional Commission in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League to refuse a Transfer Application to another league within the AFL Regional Commission it is affiliated with, provided the appeal is lodged in writing (“the notice of

appeal”) with the Region Manager within seven (7) clear days of receiving written notification of the refusal.

(b) The notice of appeal shall be accompanied by

(i) a copy of the Transfer Application

(ii) the sum of \$500 for Senior clubs and \$250 for Junior clubs, for costs of the appeal, which shall not be refunded in any circumstances; and

(iii) a further sum of \$1500 for Senior clubs and \$750 for Junior clubs which sum shall be dealt with as follows:

- where the AFL Regional Commission upholds an appeal the sum paid by the club shall be refunded; or
- where the AFL Regional Commission dismisses the appeal and determines that the Club’s reason(s) for the appeal did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion, that all, or part of the sum not be refunded.

4.2 (ii)

(a) An existing or amalgamated club may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of:

(i) a decision of an Affiliated League to refuse a Transfer Application to another league within a different AFL Regional Commission it is affiliated with; or

(ii) a decision of an Affiliated League to refuse a transfer application under Regulation 3.17(a) provided the appeal is lodged in writing (“the notice of appeal”) with the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager within seven (7) clear days of receiving written notification of the refusal.

4.3

An appeal shall be considered by the Appeal Panel within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the notice of appeal by the Region Manager, or such other period as the Appeal Panel may determine.

4.4

(a) Prior to determining the appeal, the existing or amalgamated club and both Affiliated Leagues (or where the appeal relates to a decision of an Affiliated League to refuse a transfer application under Regulation 3.17(a), that Affiliated League only) shall, within the time specified by the Appeal Panel, lodge with the Region Manager written submissions which contain:–

- (i) any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the Transfer Application and the appeal; and
- (ii) any other matters which they desire to be taken into account by the Appeal Panel in determining the appeal.

(b) The Region Manager shall as soon as practicable but prior to the hearing of the appeal, distribute the written submissions to the parties concerned in the appeal.

4.5

(a) The hearing before the Appeal Panel shall be:–

- (i) inquisitorial in nature; and
- (ii) conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as a proper consideration of the matters before it permits.

(b) The Appeal Panel:–

- (i) shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner;

- (ii) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit;
- (iii) may regulate the proceedings before it in such manner as it thinks fit; and
- (iv) may confirm, reverse or modify the decision of an Affiliated League and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it thinks fit.

(c) The Appeal Panel shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision.

4.6

An existing or amalgamated club may only lodge one (1) appeal in each year under this Regulation 4.

4.7 AFL Victoria Country Reviews - Implementation and Appeals

Where the WorkSafe AFL Victoria Country or AFL Regional Commission has conducted a review of a WorkSafe Affiliated League(s) or AFL Regional Commission the recommendations are required to be accepted provided that the following requirements have been met:

- All Reviews must be approved by the AFL Victoria Community Football Manager prior to commencement.
- Review – framework distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – consultation meetings offered to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – draft review recommendations distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – submissions on draft review recommendations from all affected stakeholders named in the framework considered by the Review Panel
- Review – submissions on draft review recommendations for stakeholders not originally included in the initial review framework considered by the Review Panel
- Review – final review recommendations distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – appeal against the implementation of the review recommendations by an affected stakeholder(s)

Any appeal against the implementation of the final review recommendations would be heard by AFL Victoria following the procedures of 4.7.1.

4.7.1 Appeals of Stakeholders

(a) For the purposes of this regulation if the review was conducted by AFL Victoria and impacts across two AFL Regional Commissions the Appeal Panel shall be the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel. AFL Victoria will establish the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel as it sees fit.

(b) For the purposes of this regulation if the review was conducted by an AFL Regional Commission and impacts across a single AFL Regional Commission the Appeal Panel shall be the AFL Victoria Appeals established as it sees fit.

4.7.2

(a) An affected stakeholder to a review may appeal to the Appeal Panel in respect of review recommendations, provided the appeal is lodged in writing (“the notice of appeal”) with the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager within seven (7) clear days of receiving written notification of the final review recommendations.

(b) The notice of appeal shall be accompanied by:

(i) a copy of the final review recommendations

(ii) the sum of \$500 for Senior appellants and \$250 for Junior appellants, for costs of the appeal, which shall not be refunded in any circumstances; and

(iii) a further sum of \$1500 for Senior appellants and \$750 for Junior appellants which sum shall be dealt with as follows:

- where the Appeal Panel upholds an appeal the sum paid by the club shall be refunded; or
- where the Appeal Panel dismisses the appeal and determines that the appellants reason(s) for the appeal did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion, that all, or part of the sum not be refunded.

4.7.3

An appeal shall be considered by the Appeal Panel within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the notice of appeal by the Region Manager, or such other period as the Appeal Panel may determine.

4.7.4

(a) Prior to determining the appeal, the appellant shall, within the time specified by the Appeal Panel, lodge with Country Football Manager or their nominee written submissions which contain:-

(i) any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the review recommendations and the appeal; and

(ii) any other matters which they desire to be taken into account by the Appeal Panel in determining the appeal.

(b) The person managing the appeal process shall as soon as practicable but prior to the matter being dealt with by the Appeals Panel, distribute the written submissions to the parties concerned in the appeal.

4.7.5

(a) The hearing before the Appeal Panel shall be:-

(i) by submission only

(b) The Appeal Board:-

(i) shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner;

(ii) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit;

(iii) may regulate the proceedings before it in such manner as it thinks fit; and

(iv) may confirm, reverse or modify the review recommendations and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it thinks fit.

(c) The Appeal Panel shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision.

4.7.6

An appellant may only lodge one (1) appeal in each year under this Regulation 4.7.

5.0 UNBECOMING CONDUCT

Rule 5.1 Appointment of Investigation Officer:

Each league shall appoint an AFL Victoria Country accredited investigation officer to investigate any matter referred to him pursuant to Rule 5.2 (unbecoming conduct).

Rule 5.2 Unbecoming Conduct:

(a) (i) The League, League Executive members, Club, Player, League or a AFL Victoria Country appointed official, who alleges that a player or an official of a club, umpire, official of an umpires' Association, AFL Victoria Country Official, League official, Club, player advocate, or League appointed official has been guilty of conduct which is unbecoming to a player, umpire, such official, or club, or which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute, may lodge with the League a Notice in writing setting out particulars of the allegation. Unless the notice is lodged by the League a deposit of \$500 shall accompany the notice which shall be forfeited in whole or part in the event that the Investigation Officer or Independent Tribunal considers it frivolous. A Notice under this paragraph must be **lodged with the League within five days** after the date of the act or omission to which it relates unless the League agrees to extend this period to a maximum of thirty (30) days.

An extension agreed to by the League may be subject to such conditions as the League thinks fit and such request for an extension is to be provided to the League in writing outlining the reasons for the extension request.

When a League grants an extension it shall do so in writing and advise all parties to the matter. See Appendix 4 in Section 3 of this handbook for a Notice of Investigation Template.

(ii) **Within two (2) days of the request** for an investigation the League is required to provide all parties notification of the investigation outlining details of the requested incident or matter for investigation.

(b) Notice of any allegation received under paragraph (a) shall be referred to the Investigation Officer for investigation by him/ her. The Investigation Officer may investigate the allegation as he sees fit. **Such investigation shall be completed within 10 days** of the matter being referred to the Investigation Officer unless, at the completion of the 10 days, one (1) extension of time being not more than ten (10) days is then granted by the League at the request of the Investigation Officer.

Request for extension of time must be received in writing by the League.

(c) If the Investigation Officer, after investigation of the allegation, is of the opinion that the Player, Official or Club in question may have been guilty of conduct unbecoming to a Player, an Official or Club or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute and that the allegation ought to be dealt with by the League Independent Tribunal as hereinafter provided, he/she may lodge with the League a Notice in writing setting out details of the allegation. (Refer to pro forma notice in Section 3 of this handbook).

(d) If a Notice is lodged with the League under paragraph (c), the League administrator who appointed the investigator may provide the alleged offender/s the discretion to plead guilty and take the relevant set penalty for the alleged offence as described in the set penalty schedule below. If a player wishes to enter an early guilty plea and accept the minimum set penalty offered by the League, the players club secretary must contact the League administrator no later than 12 noon on the first business day following the release of the Investigation officer's findings. Such request shall be made in writing and delivered by email to the League Secretary/General Manager/ CEO. If the alleged offence falls outside of the offences listed within the set penalty schedule below or either the investigation officer, player/s being investigated, the player/s allegedly offended against, the League or the President / Secretary of either club request that the matter proceeds to tribunal, by

no later than 12 noon on the first business day following the release of the Investigation officer's findings, then no set penalty will be offered and the matter will be dealt with according to section (e) of Rule 5.0.

Set Penalty Schedule

- (a) (i) intentionally striking another person (2 match set penalty) carelessly striking another person (1 match set penalty)
- (iv) charging another person (2 match set penalty)
- (v) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent i (2 match set penalty)
- (ix) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of an opponent (1 match set penalty)
- (x) scratching another person (1 match set penalty)
- (xi) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg (1 match set penalty)

- (h) using abusive, insulting, or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire (2 match set penalty)
- (j) carelessly making contact with an umpire (2 match set penalty)
- (k) disputing a decision of an umpire (1 match set penalty) (m) attempting to strike another person (1 match set penalty)
- (n) attempting to kick another person ((2 match set penalty)
- (o) attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg (1 match set penalty)
- (p) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured player (2 match set penalty)
- (q) engaging in a melee, (1 match set penalty)
- (r) instigating a melee (2 match set penalty)
- (s) wrestling another person (1 match set penalty)
- (t) pinching another person (1 match set penalty) u) engaging in an act of staging (1 match set penalty)
- (v) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language (1 match set penalty)
- (w) use of an obscene gesture (1 match set penalty)
- (x) engaging in time wasting (1 match set penalty)
- (y) interfering with a player kicking for goal (1 match set penalty)
- (z) intentionally shaking, climbing or otherwise interfering with a goal or behind post (1 match set penalty)
- (aa) failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by an umpire (2 match set penalty)
- (bb) wearing boots, jewellery and equipment prohibited under Law 9 of the AFL Laws of Australian Football (1 match set penalty).

(e) If a Notice is lodged with the League under paragraph (c), and the League determines that it should be heard at Tribunal the League Secretary shall fix a date, time and place for the hearing of the allegation before the League Independent Tribunal, **being a date not later than 9 days after lodgement of the Notice** and shall advise the Player, official or club, in question of those particulars and forward to the Player, Official, or club, care of the Club Secretary in question a copy, with a copy also to be forwarded to the Club Secretary of the Notice lodged under paragraph (c). Such notices shall be forwarded only to the charged player or official or club prior to the Hearing with such notice to be forwarded to the player and club at least 48 hours prior to the Hearing and the charged player or official or club shall be informed at the time as to whom it is proposed to call as witnesses.

Notices should include any other relevant information pertaining to the matter at hand. See Appendix 3 in Section 3 of this Handbook for a charge sheet template.

(f) In any proceeding brought before a tribunal or Appeals Board under this rule the Investigation Officer may personally appear before it and lay the necessary charge or charges and act as the prosecuting officer for the League.

(g) If the League Independent Tribunal is of the opinion that the Player, Official or Club in question has engaged in unbecoming conduct or conduct which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute, it may make such orders and give such directions in the matter as it thinks fit. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the League Independent Tribunal:–

(i) may impose a fine of such amount as it thinks fit on the Player, Official or club in question: or
(ii) must suspend the Player, Official or Club in question for such matches as it thinks fit, if the Player, Official or Club is found guilty

(h) In any hearing before an AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board the Investigations Officer will be the informant and witness for the league or Association but will usually not be the prosecuting advocate in the hearing.

6.0 AFFILIATED/UNAFFILIATED CLUBS

An affiliated club is a club which is a member of a League/Association which is affiliated with AFL Victoria Regional Commission.

6.1

An affiliated club is a member who is affiliated to an AFL Victoria Regional Commission and must pay an affiliation fee annually to AFL Victoria.

6.2

Clubs in recess must pay an Affiliation Fee including Public Liability Insurance to the level of one senior team rate to AFL Victoria Country.

6.3

After a period of two years in recess the club in recess will be deemed to have disbanded unless, after an application from the club, AFL Victoria Country extends the term.

7.0 DISCIPLINARY MATTERS AND APPEALS

7.1 League Independent Tribunal

7.1.1 Appointment by League

Each League shall, in accordance with its Statement of Rules/Constitution and any relevant rules or regulations, appoint from time to time persons to a disciplinary tribunal to be known as the League's Independent Tribunal. A League Independent Tribunal must, when hearing a matter, consist of 3 members, one of whom shall act as chairman.

7.1.2 Qualification

A person shall not be appointed to the relevant League Independent Tribunal if that person in the twelve months preceding the date of the proposed appointment

- (a) has held any office of the League;
- (b) has held any office of a Club competing in a competition conducted by the League.

7.2 Area Appeal Committee

7.2.1 Appointment and Members of Appeal Committee

Subject to the remaining provisions of Regulation 8.2, an Area Appeal Committee shall consist of the relevant Region Manager, AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager and a Rules Committee Member or other member as AFL Victoria sees fit. For the purposes of hearing and determining a matter, an Area Appeal Committee shall comprise 3 persons one of whom shall act as chairman.

7.3 National Age Dispensation Policy Appeals

The relevant Appeal Body for Country Leagues is the Commission or Commission appointed panel for any appeals in relation to the National Age Dispensation Policy.

7.4 Jurisdiction of League Independent Tribunal and Area Appeals Committee

7.4.1 League Independent Tribunal

The following matters shall be referred to a League's Independent Tribunal for hearing and determination:

- (a) reportable offences under the Laws of Australian Football;
- (b) a matter referred by a relevant league or Association on the recommendation of an Investigation Officer;
- (c) any appeal by a club/s, player/s or official/s against the decision of the affiliated League or its independent tribunal for non-reportable offences;
- (d) any other matter referred to it by the relevant League or AFL Victoria Country Football Manager.

7.4.2 Area Appeal Committee

The relevant Area Appeal Committee shall, in accordance with these Regulations, hear and determine:

- (a) any appeal by a player against a decision of either their current Club or League to refuse his application for a clearance; or
- (b) any other matters referred to it by AFL Victoria Country Football Manager; or
- (c) any appeal by a club/s, player/s or official/s against a decision of the affiliated league or its independent tribunal for non-reportable offences.

7.5 Appeals Against Refused Clearances – Players & Other Appeals under 7.4.2

7.5.1 Player May Appeal

(a) A player may appeal to their relevant Area Appeal Committee if:

- (i) they are not granted a clearance to transfer from their current Club to another Club within the same League;
- (ii) they are not granted a clearance to transfer from their current Club to another Club which plays in a League located within the same Region; or

(b) A player may appeal to the Area Appeals Committee if he is not granted a clearance to transfer from their current club to another club which plays in a club located in another AFL Victoria Country Region.

(c) A player may only appeal if the refused clearance is in respect of transfer application which is lodged between 1st November and 30th November and 1st February and 30th June in the relevant year under the requirements of the AFL National Player Registration & Transfer Regulations.

(d) Where a player lodges more than one AFL Victoria Country Clearance/Registration Form in which they seek a clearance to the same or a different Club, they may only appeal with respect to one decision to refuse his/her application for a clearance in each year.

7.5.2 Form of Appeal and Appeal Fee

An appeal by a Player under Regulation 7.5.1 or by a Club, Player or Official under regulation 7.4.2 (c) must be brought by lodging with the Region Manager or their appointed deputy of the relevant Area, a duly completed Notice of Appeal in or substantially in the form prescribed found on the AFL Vic website. The Notice of Appeal must be accompanied by:

(a) AFL Victoria Country Clearance/Registration Form initially lodged by the Player;

(b) payment of an application fee of \$250.00 to AFL Victoria Country (via the Region Manager), which sum shall not be refunded in any circumstance; and

(c) payment to AFL Victoria Country (via the Region Manager) of a further sum of \$500.00 for Senior Clubs, for Junior Clubs a sum of \$250, which sum will be dealt with as follows:

(i) where the Area Appeal Committee upholds the appeal and grants a clearance to the player, the sum paid by the Player shall be refunded; or

(ii) where the Area Appeal Committee dismisses the appeal and considers that the appeal did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion that all or part of the sum paid by the Player, Club or Official not be refunded.

7.5.3 Timing of Appeal

A Notice of Appeal must be lodged with the Region Manager or their appointed deputy no later than 10 days of the decision by the League Secretary or appointed representative of the Club which refused the clearance.

An appeal shall be considered by the Area Appeal Committee within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of appeal by the relevant Region Manager, or such other period as the Area Appeal Committee may determine.

(a) Prior to determining the appeal, the parties to the appeal (club requesting the transfer and the club opposing the transfer or parties to an appeal under 7.3.2 b) & c) shall, within the time specified by the Area Appeal Committee, lodge with the relevant Region Manager, or their appointed deputy of the relevant Area, written submissions which contain:–

(i) any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the Transfer Application and the appeal; and

(ii) any other matters which they desire to be taken into account by the Area Appeal Committee in determining the appeal.

(b) The relevant Region Manager shall as soon as practicable distribute the written submissions to each party and seek final submissions from each party which, in turn, will be distributed to the Area Appeals Committee.

(c) The Area Appeal Committee:-

- (i) shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner;
- (ii) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit;
- (iv) may grant or deny the transfer and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it thinks fit.

(d) The Area Appeal Committee shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision.

7.5.4 How an Appeal may be Lodged

A Notice of Appeal may be lodged by hand, registered post, electronically or facsimile, addressed to the Region Manager or their appointed deputy.

7.5.5 Convening Appeal and Timing for Hearing of Appeal

Upon receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the following shall apply:

(a) within 48 hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal, the Region Manager or their appointed deputy shall provide a copy of that Notice to the player's current Club which has refused the player's application for a clearance or the League who has made the decision which is being appealed – refer 7.3.2 b) & c);

(b) within 48 hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal from the Region Manager or their appointed deputy, the current Club must advise the Region Manager or their appointed deputy in writing whether it intends to oppose the player's appeal (the "opposing notice") – clearance appeals only;

(c) if the current Club does intend to oppose the player's appeal, it must, at the same time as lodging the opposing notice, pay to AFL Victoria Country – clearance appeals only:

(i) if the appeal is dismissed the costs for the appeal will be returned; and

(ii) a further sum of \$500 for Senior clubs and \$250 for Junior clubs, which sum shall be dealt with as follows: - clearance appeals only

- where an Area Appeal Committee dismisses an appeal made by a player/ club, the sum paid by the Club shall be refunded; or
- where the Area Appeal Committee upholds the player's appeal and determines that the Club's reason(s) for refusing the clearance did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion, that all, or part of the sum not be refunded;

(d) If the current Club does not, within the prescribed time, lodge an opposing notice or pay the required amounts, the player's clearance must be granted by the relevant Region Manager without the Area Appeal Committee hearing the appeal - clearance appeals only.

In that event, the current club shall be fined \$150 payable to AFL Victoria within 10 days of the date of Notice of Appeal with all monies to be refunded to the appellant - clearance appeals only.

(e) if the current Club does, within the prescribed time, lodge an opposing notice and pay the required amounts, Regulation 7.5.6 shall apply.

7.5.6 Time and Notification for Appeal

(a) Upon receiving a notice of appeal and payment of the required amounts within the prescribed

time, the Region Manager or their appointed deputy shall arrange to provide a decision on the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of receiving the notice of appeal, or as soon as practicable after that time; If the Region Manager does not fix a date, time and place for the decision of the appeal, AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager may, upon application by the player, refer the matter directly to the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board for hearing and determination.

(b) Variation of Hearing

The Area Appeal Committee may vary the timing of submissions initially specified for the appeal and upon doing so, shall immediately provide all parties interested in the appeal written notice of any such variation.

7.6 Sanction imposed by a Club – Player Appeal

7.6.1 Right of Appeal

A Player may appeal to the League Independent Tribunal of the League in which his/her Club plays, in respect of a decision by his/her Club to impose a sanction upon him/her, including without limitation a suspension or monetary sanction.

7.6.2 Form and Timing of Appeal

An appeal by a player must:

- (a) be in writing, signed by the player lodging the appeal;
- (b) provide full particulars of the decision of the player's Club;
- (c) be lodged with the Manager of the relevant League no later than 9 days after the player is notified of the sanction imposed by his Club; and
- (d) be accompanied by a payment to the League Independent Tribunal of \$500.00 for Seniors and \$250 for Juniors, which the League Independent Tribunal shall determine in its absolute discretion whether to refund none, all or part of the \$500.

7.6.3 Time for Hearing

(a) Upon receipt of an appeal under this Regulation 7.6, the Secretary or appointed representative of the relevant League shall:–

- (i) fix the date, time and place for the hearing of the appeal within 14 days of receipt of the appeal, or as soon as practicable after that time; and
- (ii) give written notice of these particulars to the player and the relevant Club at least 72 hours before the date and time scheduled for the appeal.

(b) The League Independent Tribunal may vary the date, time and place initially specified for the appeal and upon doing so, shall immediately provide all parties interested in the appeal written notice of any such variation.

7.6.4 Player may still Lodge Clearance

Nothing in this Regulation 7.6 shall prevent a player from seeking a clearance from his Club in accordance with these Regulations.

7.6.5 No Further Right of Appeal

A decision by a League Independent Tribunal in respect of an appeal brought under this Regulation 7.6 shall be final and no appeal may be made to other AFL Victoria Country Appeal processes.

7.7 Procedure and Evidence before League Independent Tribunal and Area Appeal Committee

7.7.1 Application of this Regulation

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions contained in this Regulation 7.7 shall apply in respect of all hearings of a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee.

7.7.2 Regulate Own Procedure Subject to the further matters set out in this Regulation 7.7, a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee may regulate any proceedings brought before it in such manner as it thinks fit.

7.7.3 Conduct of Hearing and Attendance

(a) Conduct

A hearing before a League Independent Tribunal shall be:

- (i) inquisitorial in nature; and
- (ii) conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as a proper consideration of the matters before it permits

(b) Attendance

A person shall attend and appear before a League Independent Tribunal (Area Appeal Committee hearings are determined by submission – no attendance at such hearings are required) at the date, time and place fixed for hearing. Where a person fails to attend, other than a player reported for a field offence, before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, as the case may be, that body may hear and determine the matter in that party's absence.

Players reported for a field offence must attend the next tribunal hearing of the League Tribunal. The player cannot play unless the case has been heard. Where the Tribunal deems that the player has reasonably been unable to attend the hearing and therefore adjourns the matter the player shall be eligible to play pending resolution of the matter.

(c) Adjournment In the event that an adjournment is sought by a charged player, because of legal action, such player will be automatically ineligible to play or participate in any official match until such charges have been heard.

7.7.4 Rules of Evidence

(a) Not Bound by Rules of Evidence

A League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee is not bound by the rules of evidence or practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter and in such manner as it thinks fit.

(b) Video Evidence – League Independent Tribunal

Where a League Independent Tribunal is conducting a hearing into a reportable offence or other alleged conduct of a person and it considers that video evidence is capable of determining the reportable offence or alleged conduct, the League Independent Tribunal may after hearing evidence make a finding solely on the basis of that unaltered video evidence.

7.7.5 Specific Procedure for Player Clearance – Player Declaration in Dispute – Area Appeal Committee Only

Where a player has lodged an appeal for a clearance and an issue before the Area Appeal Committee is the validity of a Player Declaration between the player and their current Club, the following

procedure shall apply:

(a) the Area Appeal Committee shall adjourn the hearing of the matter for a period of 14 days, or such other period as determined by the Chairman of the Area Appeal Committee;

(b) within 7 days of the adjournment, the player and the Club shall provide written submissions to the Chairman regarding the Player Declaration in dispute;

(c) the Area Appeal Committee shall determine the validity of the Player Declaration based upon the written submissions provided by the parties. In undertaking that task, the Area Appeal Committee may obtain its own legal advice concerning the issues requiring determination;

(d) where the Area Appeal Committee determines that the Player Declaration is valid and enforceable, it shall advise the parties in writing and the appeal shall stand dismissed. Such a decision shall be deemed to be a decision made under Regulation 7.7.11(a); and

(e) where the Area Appeal Committee determines that the Player Declaration is invalid and unenforceable, the Area Appeal Committee shall advise the parties accordingly in writing, reconvene the further hearing of the appeal, and proceed to determine the appeal based on any other relevant matters put before it.

7.7.6 Natural Justice and Other Obligations

A League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee Board shall:

(a) provide any person whose interest will be directly and adversely effected by its decision a reasonable opportunity to be heard in person or in writing as determined by the panel;

(b) hear and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner; and

(c) make a decision that a reasonable body could honestly arrive at.

7.7.7 Express Exclusion of Natural Justice – League Independent Tribunal Only

A League Independent Tribunal shall endeavour to hear and determine any reportable offence or matter referred to it before the person's Club is next scheduled to compete, irrespective of whether the hearing is scheduled at short notice or whether the hearing of the matter may affect the person's or the person's Club's preparation for the next scheduled match. To the extent that the rules of natural justice require that:

(a) a person be given adequate notice of or sufficient time to prepare for a hearing; or

(b) the hearing be scheduled at a time that does not affect the person or the person's Club preparation for the next scheduled match, those requirements are expressly excluded from these Regulations.

7.7.8 New Hearing

An Area Appeal Committee and a League Independent Tribunal (if it is hearing an appeal), shall deal with the appeal as a new hearing.

7.7.9 Standard of Proof

A League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee shall decide a matter before it to its reasonable satisfaction.

7.7.10 Onus of Proof

No person appearing before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee shall bear an onus of establishing the matters before the relevant body for determination.

7.7.11 Decision and Sanction

(a) Decision

If the case is heard by the Tribunal or Area Appeals Committee and a player is found guilty of an offence the player may be subject to penalty as determined by the tribunal or area appeal committee as permitted within regulation 11.0. Players may also be subject to further penalty at the discretion of the tribunal or panel based upon the strength of evidence put before the tribunal or Area Appeals Committee.

(b) Majority Decision The question(s) before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee must be decided according to the opinion of a majority of members constituting the relevant body.

(c) Sanction – League Independent Tribunal

In the case of a League Independent Tribunal determining a sanction for a reportable offence or other conduct which has been sustained against a person, the League Independent Tribunal may have regard to any matters which it considers relevant to the question of sanction and without limitation may consider:

- (i) the seriousness of the reportable offence or conduct sustained against the person;
- (ii) any injury sustained or effect upon the person against whom the reportable offence or conduct has been committed;
- (iii) the prior record of reportable offences or conduct committed by the person; and
- (iv) in so far as they are relevant, any objectives contained in AFL Victoria Country Rules and Regulations or League Rules.

(d) Hearing on Sanction - League Independent Tribunal

Where a matter is sustained against a person by a League Independent Tribunal, the League Independent Tribunal shall provide that person a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the question of sanction before imposing any sanction. It is the responsibility of the guilty players advocate to attempt to mitigate the sanction.

(e) Set Sanctions - A League may pass a rule which prescribes a range of set sanctions for particular reportable offences, provided the rule complies with any guidelines published from time to time by AFL Victoria Country. Sanctions will apply to the matches identified by the tribunal or the next matches the person would be eligible to participate in.

(f) Payment of Monetary Sanction - Unless otherwise determined by a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, any monetary sanction imposed shall be paid to the relevant League or no later than 28 days after the decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, as the case may be.

7.7.12 No Reasons

A League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee is not obliged to give reasons for any decision made by it.

7.7.13 Unreasonable Restraint of Trade

A League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee shall not make a determination which amounts to an unreasonable restraint of a person's trade.

7.7.14 Guidelines

(a) AFL Victoria Country may make, revoke or amend guidelines for the practice and procedure with respect to a hearing before a League Independent Tribunal or an Area Appeal Committee. Such guidelines are expected to be adopted and followed by each League and League Independent Tribunal and each Area Appeal Committee of affiliated leagues.

(b) The current guidelines for the practice and procedure with respect to a hearing before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee is contained in the document headed "AFL Victoria Country Independent Tribunal and Appeal Board/ Committee – Guidelines for Tribunal and Appeal Board Members" section 3 of this Handbook. Guidelines do not overrule any AFL Victoria Country regulation where there is conflict.

7.7.15 Representation

At any hearing before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, a person, other than a witness, may appear in person or appear with and be represented by an advocate. No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practise as a barrister or solicitor. For the purposes of an AFL Vic Country tribunal hearing an offended against player is a witness.

7.7.16 Co-operation with League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeals Committee

(a) A person shall appear before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee if requested, unless the relevant body is satisfied that the person has a legitimate reason for not attending.

(b) Any person who appears before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee shall:

- (i) fully co-operate with the relevant body;
- (ii) truthfully answer any questions he or she is asked;
- (iii) upon request by the relevant body, provide any document in that person's possession or control which is relevant to the matter to be determined by the relevant body;
- (iv) not make any statement or act in a manner which is false or misleading or calculated to mislead or which is likely to mislead; and
- (v) act in a courteous and polite manner during the hearing and after a decision has been made.

(c) Where a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee considers that a person has contravened this Regulation 7.7.16, it may deal with the matter and impose sanctions upon the person as it in its absolute discretion deems fit. Provided the person is given natural justice to state their case before the tribunal prior to any sanction being imposed.

8.0 AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Appeal Board – APPEAL FROM LEAGUE INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL OR AREA APPEAL COMMITTEE DECISION

8.1 AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board

8.1.1 Appointment

AFL Victoria Country Football Manager may from time to time appoint persons to a board to be known as the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board.

8.1.2 Members of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall consist of:-

- (a) a chairman and a deputy chairman, and
- (b) a panel of not more than 5 who in the opinion of AFL Victoria Country Football Manager, possesses a knowledge of Australian Football and is suitable for appointment (“panel members”).

8.1.3 Absent Members

If for any period and for any reason a member is absent or unable to attend a hearing of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board, AFL Victoria Country Football Manager may appoint a person who in his opinion is a suitable replacement.

8.1.4 Resignation

A member of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may resign by providing notice in writing to AFL Victoria Country Football Manager.

8.1.5 Removal

AFL Victoria Country Football Manager may remove a member of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board at any time in his absolute discretion.

8.1.6 Composition for Hearing

For the purpose of hearing and determining an appeal, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall be constituted by:-

- (a) the chairman or in the chairman’s absence, the deputy chairman who shall act as chairman; and
- (b) at least two panel members; and the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board as constituted shall conduct a hearing in respect of the appeal.

8.2 Regulation Paramount

Regulation 8 prescribes the procedures for an appeal commenced by a charged person or organisation, excluding umpires or witnesses in respect of a decision made by a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee.

To the extent that any provision in Regulation 8 is inconsistent with any other AFL Victoria Country rule or regulation, the provisions of Regulation 8 shall prevail.

8.3 Right of Appeal

(a) Only the charged person or organisation, subject to the decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee under Rule 7.7.11, may appeal to AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board provided the appeal is brought no later than 2.00 pm on the second day after which the decision of the tribunal or relevant body was made.

(b) The right of a person to appeal to AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board does not apply to a decision of a League Independent Tribunal in respect of an appeal by a Player under Regulation 7.6.

8.4 Notice of Appeal

An appeal under Regulation 8.3 shall be brought by lodging with AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager a duly completed "AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal" in or substantially in the form prescribed, accompanied by:–

(a) any documents initially provided to the relevant body whose decision is the subject of the appeal;

(b) payment or evidence of payment to AFL Victoria Country of the sum of \$2500 for Senior clubs/ organisations and for Junior clubs/organisations a sum of \$1250 for costs of the appeal, which sum shall not be refunded in any circumstances; and

(c) payment or evidence of payment to AFL Victoria Country of the further sum of \$3,000 for Senior clubs/organisations and for Junior clubs/ organisations a sum of \$1500, which sum shall be dealt with as follows:–

(i) where the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board upholds the appeal, the sum of \$3000 or \$1500 shall be refunded; or

(ii) where the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board dismisses the appeal and considers that the appeal did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion that all or part of the sum of \$3,000 or \$1500 not be refunded.

8.5 Lodgement of Notice of Appeal

An AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal shall be lodged by:–

(a) hand delivering;

(b) transmitting by facsimile, or

(c) electronically that notice addressed to AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager, which must be received by no later than 2.00pm on the second day after the decision of the relevant body was made. A Notice of Appeal lodged by facsimile is lodged within time if it is accompanied by evidence that the \$5500 for Seniors or \$2750 for Juniors required to be paid under Regulation 8.4 has been paid and in that respect, the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager may accept a photocopy of a cheque for the relevant amount and an undertaking that the cheque has been posted to AFL Victoria Country as sufficient compliance with Regulation 8.4.

8.6 Time for Hearing of Appeal

8.6.1 Notification

Upon receipt of an AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal and the required sum of \$5500 (Senior) or \$2750 (Junior), AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager shall:–

(a) fix the date, time and place for the hearing of the appeal as soon as practicable; and

(b) advise all parties interested in the appeal in writing of those particulars.

8.6.2 Variation of Time or Place

The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may vary the date, time or place specified under Regulation 8.6.1 and upon doing so shall immediately provide all parties interested in the appeal written notice of any such variation. Where the appeal relates to a suspension imposed upon an appellant by a League Independent Tribunal, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall endeavour to hear and determine the appeal before the day on which the appellant's Club is next scheduled to compete.

8.6.3 Attendance

All parties to the appeal shall attend and appear before the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board at the date, time and place fixed for the hearing of the appeal. Where a party fails to attend before the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may hear and determine the appeal in that party's absence or have the unavailable party available by phone or video link should the need arise.

8.7 Obligations of Appeal Board

8.7.1 Natural Justice and Other Obligations

The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall:–

- (a) provide any person whose interest will be directly and adversely affected by its decision a reasonable opportunity to be heard;
- (b) hear and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner; and
- (c) make a decision that any reasonable body could honestly arrive at in the circumstances.

8.7.2 Express Exclusion

Subject to Regulation 8.6.2 and 8.8, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall endeavour to hear and determine an appeal brought under this Rule 8 before the appellant's Club is next scheduled to compete, irrespective of whether the appeal is heard at short notice or whether the hearing of the appeal may affect the appellant's or the appellant's Club's preparation for the next scheduled match. To the extent that the rules of natural justice require that:–

- (a) a person be given adequate notice of or sufficient time to prepare for an appeal; or
- (b) the appeal be scheduled at a time that does not affect the appellant's or the appellant's Club's preparation for the next scheduled Match, those requirements are expressly excluded from these Regulations.

8.8 Adjournment and Stay of Sanction

8.8.1 Person to Serve Sanction

Subject to Regulation 8.8.2, where a League Independent Tribunal imposes a sanction which prevents the appellant from participating in a match, the appellant shall serve that sanction pending the determination of the appeal.

8.8.2 Power to Adjourn and Stay of Sanction

Subject to Regulation 8.8.3, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may of its own motion or upon application of any party to the appeal, order:–

- (a) that an appeal be adjourned; and/or
- (b) a stay of the execution of the sanction imposed by a League Independent Tribunal pending the determination of the appeal.

8.8.3 Exceptional and Compelling Circumstances

The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall make an order under Regulation 8.8.2 only where it is satisfied that there are exceptional and compelling circumstances that make it harsh and unconscionable if an order was not made staying the execution of the sanction. In determining that

question, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall without limitation have regard to:-

(a) the merits of the appeal and the appellant's prospects of success;

(b) the interests of other Clubs and Players; and

(c) the effect on the results of the competition conducted by the relevant League.

8.9 New Hearing

(a) Subject to Regulation 8.9(b), the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall deal with the appeal as a new hearing.

(b) The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may have regard to any record of the proceeding before a League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, including a record of any evidence taken at the hearing.

8.10 Procedure and Evidence

8.10.1 Regulate own Procedure

Subject to the further matters set out in this Regulation 8, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may regulate any proceedings brought before it in such manner as it thinks fit.

8.10.2 Conduct of Appeal

The hearing before the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall be:-

(a) inquisitorial in nature; and

(b) conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as the proper consideration of the matters before it permits.

8.10.3 Rules of Evidence

The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit.

8.10.4 Video Evidence

Where the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board is conducting a hearing into a reportable offence or other alleged conduct of a person and it considers that video evidence is capable of determining the reportable offence or the alleged conduct, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may make a finding solely on the basis of that unaltered video evidence.

8.10.5 Specific Procedure: Validity of Player Declaration

Regulation 7.7.5 shall apply to the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board where an issue before it is the validity of a Player Declaration between the appellant and a Club and any reference to the Area Appeal Committee shall be read as a reference to the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board.

8.11 Power of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board

8.11.1 Decisions

The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may confirm, reverse, increase or modify the decision of the body the subject of the appeal and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it

thinks fit. Any decision of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board is not restricted in any way by the local rules or regulations of the League in question.

8.11.2 Certain Regulations to Apply

Regulations 7.7.11(c) and (d) and Regulation 8.6.3 shall apply to appeals before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Committee and any reference to the League Independent Tribunal or Area Appeal Committee, as the case may be, shall be read as a reference to AFL Victoria Country Appeal Committee.

8.12 Onus of Proof

No person appearing before the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall bear an onus of establishing the matters before it for determination.

8.13 Standard of Proof

The AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall decide a matter before it to its reasonable satisfaction.

8.14 Majority Decisions

The question on appeal before the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board must be decided according to the opinion of a majority of the members constituting AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board.

8.15 No Reasons

The Appeal Board is not obliged to give reasons for a decision under Regulation 8.11.

8.16 Representation

At any hearing before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board, a person or organisation, excluding umpires or witnesses may appear in person or appear with and be represented by an advocate. No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practise as a barrister or solicitor, excepting Investigation Officers who are barristers or solicitors or qualified to practise as a barrister or solicitor.

8.17 Questions of Law and Fact

In the hearing and determination of an appeal, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall decide all questions of law and fact and without limitation, shall determine the meaning of any words.

8.18 Costs

Parties to an AFL Victoria Country Appeal can apply for reasonable costs by contacting AFL Victoria Football Operations Department.

8.19 Abandon Appeal

(a) An appellant may abandon an appeal no later than 48 hours prior to the time set down for the hearing by giving written notice to AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager, in which case the payments made by the appellant under Regulations 8.4 (b) and (c) shall be refunded.

(b) Where an appellant abandons the appeal within 48 hours of the time as set down for the hearing or during the conduct of the appeal and AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board considers that the appeal did not have sufficient merit, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may determine in its absolute discretion that all or part of the payment made under Regulation 8.4(c) not be refunded.

8.20 Validity of Hearing

(a) Where there is any procedural irregularity in the manner in which an appeal has been brought, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may still hear and determine the appeal unless it is of the opinion that the irregularity has caused or may cause injustice if the appeal was heard.

(b) A decision of AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board is not invalid because of any defect or irregularity in, or in connection with, the appointment of an AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board Member.

8.21 Co-operation with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board

(a) A person shall appear before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board if requested, unless AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board is satisfied that the person has a legitimate reason for not attending.

(b) Any person who appears before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall:

(i) fully co-operate with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board;

(ii) truthfully answer any questions he or she is asked;

(iii) upon request, provide any document in that person's possession or control which is relevant to the matter to be determined; and

(iv) not make any statement or act in a manner which is false or misleading or calculated to or which is likely to mislead.

(c) Where AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board considers that a person has contravened this Regulation 8.21(a) or (b), it may deal with the matter and impose sanctions upon the person as it in its absolute discretion deems fit.

8.22 Exhaust Internal Appeal

A person shall exercise his or her right of appeal under this Regulation 8 and have any appeal heard and determined by AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board before commencing any proceedings or becoming a party to any proceedings in a court of law.

8.23 Further Time

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules and Regulations, where any time limit is imposed for the doing of any act or thing or for any other purpose (including the time within which a person may appeal to the relevant Area Appeal Board or AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board), AFL Victoria Community Football Manager may in his/her absolute discretion extend or allow any further period of time within which a person may do any act or thing under these Rules & Regulations.

9.0 VILIFICATION AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Full details of the policy are available on the AFL Victoria website under the Policies section.

Prohibited Conduct

1.1 Vilification & Discrimination

No League Participant or Club Official shall engage in conduct which may reasonably be considered to incite hatred towards, contempt for, ridicule of or discrimination against a person or group of persons on the ground of their:

- race;
- religion;
- gender;
- colour;

- sexual preference, orientation or identity; or
- special ability or disability.

2. Appointment of League Complaints Officer/s & Club Complaints Officer

2.1 The League shall appoint a League Complaints Officer/s to ensure that any breach of this Policy is responded to in an equitable and prompt manner in accordance with this Policy.

2.2 The League shall ensure that all Clubs have a Club Complaints Officer to whom all vilification and discrimination Complaints are directed.

2.3 The League Complaints Officer/s is responsible for liaising between Club Complaints Officers, in the case of an Inter-Club Complaint, or with a single Club Complaints Officer, in the case of an Intra-Club Complaint, in an attempt to achieve Informal Resolution of the Complaint.

2.4 The Club Complaints Officer and the League Complaints Officer/s shall liaise directly over incidents which in the reasonable opinion of the Club Complaints Officer or League Complaints Officer/s are contrary to Section 1.

3. Preliminary Resolution Process

3.1 In the event that it is alleged that a person subject to section 3.1 has engaged in Prohibited Conduct, a Participant may by 5.00pm on the first working day following the day on which the Prohibited Conduct is alleged to have occurred, lodge a Complaint with the Club Complaints Officer.

3.2 In the case of an Inter-Club Complaint, the Club Complaints Officer where the Complaint was made shall by 5.00pm on the next working day following the day on which the Complaint was lodged with the Club, lodge the Complaint with the League's Complaints Officer. The Club Complaints Officer shall take no further action once the Complaint has been lodged with the League unless otherwise instructed by the League's Complaints Officer. In the case of an Inter-Club Complaint, the League Complaints Officer/s shall take reasonable steps within the next three (3) days following the day on which the Complaint was lodged with the League Complaints Officer/s to achieve an Informal Resolution if, in the reasonable opinion of the League Complaints Officer/s, the Complaint is capable of an Informal Resolution.

3.3 In the case of an Intra-Club Complaint, the Club Complaints Officer shall take reasonable steps within the next three (3) days following the day on which the Complaint was lodged with the Club to achieve an Informal Resolution if, in the reasonable opinion of the Club Complaints Officer, the Complaint is capable of an Informal Resolution. If an Informal Resolution is not achieved or it is reasonably believed that the Complaint is incapable of an Informal Resolution, the Club Complaints Officer shall as soon as is reasonably practicable lodge the Complaint with the League's Complaints Officer. The Club Complaints Officer shall take no further action once the Complaint has been lodged with the League unless otherwise instructed by the League's Complaints Officer.

3.4 In circumstances where in the reasonable opinion of the League Complaints Officer/s a Complaint cannot be resolved by way of Informal Resolution, the League Complaints Officer/s shall proceed to Conciliation in accordance with section 5 below.

4. Confidentiality and Records

4.1 Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the Complaints Process. All parties to a Complaint, the League's Complaints Officer, the Club Complaints Officer, any witnesses and the

conciliator must all agree to the maintenance of confidentiality. No person involved in the Complaints Process shall publicly comment on any aspect of the Complaints Process without the prior written agreement of all parties.

4.2 The League shall ensure that any documents relating to a Complaint shall remain confidential and be retained for 7 years from the date that the Complaint is made.

5. Conciliation Process

5.1 The League Complaints Officer/s shall:

(a) make every effort to ensure that:

(i) confidentiality is maintained at all times during the Complaints Process and that the outcome of the Complaints Process remains confidential;

(ii) any breach of confidentiality is referred to the League Tribunal no later than 5pm on the next working day following the day that the breach is discovered, with the Tribunal to be convened within 7 days from the day on which the referral is made;

(b) the person alleged to have contravened the Policy is informed of the Complaint, the Complaint Process and provide that person with an opportunity to respond to the Complaint;

(c) the President or CEO of the League or his or her Nominee is informed that a Complaint has been received by the League Complaints Officer/s;

(d) statements are obtained from any witnesses identified by the parties to the Complaint;

(e) where available, obtain any other relevant evidence;

(f) any witness statements or any other evidence obtained in the course of conciliating a Complaint is made available to both parties, with an opportunity to comment, as part of the Conciliation process;

(g) a conciliator is appointed to conciliate the Complaint; and

(h) all steps necessary for the Complaint to be conciliated are taken within 10 working days from the day on which the Prohibited Conduct is alleged to have occurred.

5.2 Participants subject to Conciliation who are under 18 years of age must be accompanied at the Conciliation by a Club Official over 18 years of age.

6 Investigation

6.1 In circumstances where a Complaint is not resolved in accordance with section 5 above, the League Complaints Officer/s may refer the matter to an Investigation Officer to investigate aspects of the allegation or circumstances surrounding the Complaint which, in the reasonable opinion of the League Complaints Officer/s, require further investigation to resolve the Complaint.

6.2 The Investigation Officer shall report to the League Complaints Officer/s on any information or evidence obtained in accordance with 6.1. Any information or evidence obtained by the

Investigation Officer and provided to the League Complaints Officer/s shall be provided to all parties to the Complaint as part of the Complaint Process.

7 Tribunal Referrals, Process & Appeal

7.1 Following an investigation under section 6, if any, or following a failed Conciliation under section 5, the League Complaints Officer/s may refer the Complaint to a League Tribunal for determination. The League Complaints Officer/s shall take all steps necessary to make a decision about the referral of the Complaint to the League Tribunal as soon as is reasonably practicable.

7.2 The League Tribunal will be constituted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the League and the League shall determine who is responsible for prosecuting the Complaint at the Tribunal.

7.3 Where the referral to the League Tribunal is made pursuant to this section 7.1 of this Policy, the Tribunal will hear the Complaint within 5 working days of the Complaint referral being made.

7.4 The League Tribunal has the power to order any reasonable penalties or directions for breaches of this Policy as are allowable under the rules and regulations of the League in force at the time of the hearing.

7.5 Where a party to a Complaint is unsatisfied with the decision made by the League Tribunal, they may ask the Club's Officer to request that the League establish a panel to hear an appeal from the decision in accordance with the League's appeal regulations.

8 Club Liability

8.1 If found to have contravened this Policy a Club may be vicariously liable for Prohibited Conduct engaged in by a Participant connected to the Club if the Club is unable to establish that it took reasonable precautions to prevent the Participant from engaging in that Prohibited Conduct.

10.0 ORDER OFF RULE

In accordance with the AFL Laws of Australian Football, permission has been granted to AFL Victoria Country requiring all affiliated Leagues to adhere to the following guidelines for the Order Off rule:

(A) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of the Australian Football offences shall be reported and ordered off the ground for the remainder of the game and is able to be replaced after 20 minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game:–

22.2.2 (Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
- (ii) kicking another person
- (iii) kneeling another person
- (viii) head butting an opponent or making contact to an opponent using the head
- (b) eye-gouging another person
- (c) stomping on another person
- (d) (intentionally making contact with or striking an umpire
- (e) attempting strike an umpire
- (j) carelessly making contact with an umpire
- (f) spitting at or on an umpire
- (cc) engaging in any other act of misconduct or serious misconduct

(B) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of Australian Football offences shall be reported and ordered from the ground for 15 minutes of actual match playing time:–

22.2.2 (Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
- (i) striking another person
- (iv) charging an opponent
- (v) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent.
- (vi) bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front on when the player has their head over the ball.
- (ix) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of an opponent.
- (x) scratching another person
- (xiii) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
- (g) behaving in an abuse, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an umpire.
- (h) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire.
- (k) disputing a decision of an umpire
- (l) spitting at or on another person
- (m) attempting to strike another person
- (n) attempting to kick another person
- (w) use of an obscene gesture

(C) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of Australian Football offences, depending upon the severity of such offence, may be ordered from the ground for 15 minutes of actual match playing time. The player may also be reported.

22.2.2 (Laws of Australian Rules Football):

- (o) attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
- (p) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured player
- (q) engaging in a melee,
- (r) instigating a melee
- (s) wrestling another person
- (t) pinching another person
- (u) engaging in an act of staging
- (v) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language
- (x) engaging in time wasting
- (y) interfering with a player kicking for goal
- (z) intentionally shaking, climbing or otherwise interfering with a goal or behind post (aa) failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field umpire
- (bb) wearing boots, jewellery and equipment prohibited under Law 9 of the AFL laws of the Game

(D) Any player reported for a second offence listed in (B) and (C) shall be sent from the field for the remainder of the match and is able to be replaced after 20 minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game.

Implementation

A Red Card indicates the player is ordered off for the remainder of the match and is able to be replaced after 20 minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game.

(E) For under age matches, field umpires may order a player off the ground for 15 minutes without reporting him.

Note: This would only apply when a player has not committed a reportable offence but has breached the law and given away a free kick in a deliberate or undisciplined manner or behaves in a manner detrimental to the image of the game.

The intention of this rule is to provide the player with a cooling off period.

Implementation

Only field umpires and emergency field umpires have the power to send players from the ground. When ordering a player off, an umpire shall signal his intention by pointing to the interchange area with an outstretched arm and holding a coloured card above his/her head with the other.

A Red Card indicates the player is ordered off for the remainder of the match and is able to be replaced after 20 minutes actual playing time.

A Yellow Card indicates the player is ordered off for 15 minutes of actual match playing time and cannot be replaced within that time.

A player ordered from the ground must leave the ground through the interchange area, report to the Interchange Steward or appropriate official on leaving the field and before returning.

In the event of a player failing or refusing to leave the field when ordered off, he/she shall be reported for misconduct. The player's captain or deputy shall be advised by the umpire that his team shall forfeit the match unless the player leaves the field immediately. If the player still refuses to leave the field, his/her team shall forfeit the match.

Boundary and goal umpires have the power to report however they do not have the power to order players from the ground, they shall advise one of the field umpires, of their report at the next appropriate break in play and the field umpire shall, with the umpire making the report, advise the player he/she has been reported and that player will be ordered from the ground.

For a player to be sent from the ground for the remainder of the match due to being reported twice (on two separate occasions) under Sections (B) and (C) of the Order Off Rule that player must have been reported on both occasions by a field umpire or league appointed boundary or goal umpire.

11.0 SET PENALTIES & REPRIMANDS

All AFL Victoria Country affiliated Leagues shall adopt set penalties for reportable offences and such set penalties shall contain the following provisions.

1. Any player reported for the following offences (as numbered in the Laws of Australian Football) may apply for a set penalty suspension of the relevant number of matches as identified.

22.2.2 (Laws of Australian Rules Football):

(a) intentionally or carelessly

(i) intentionally striking another person (2 match set penalty) carelessly striking another person (1 match set penalty)

(iv) charging another person (2 match set penalty)

(v) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent (2 match set penalty)

(ix) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of another person (1 match set penalty)

(x) scratching another person (1 match set penalty)

(xi) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg (1 match set penalty)

- (h) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire (2 match set penalty)
- (j) carelessly making contact with an umpire (2 match set penalty)
- (k) disputing a decision of an umpire (1 match set penalty)
- (m) attempting to strike another person (1 match set penalty)
- (n) attempting to kick another person (2 match set penalty)
- (o) attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg (1 match set penalty)
- (p) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured player (2 match set penalty)
- (q) engaging in a melee, (1 match set penalty)
- (r) instigating a melee (2 match set penalty)
- (s) wrestling another person (1 match set penalty)
- (t) pinching another person (1 match set penalty)
- (u) engaging in an act of staging (1 match set penalty)
- (v) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language (1 match set penalty)
- (w) use of an obscene gesture (1 match set penalty)
- (x) engaging in time wasting (1 match set penalty)
- (y) interfering with a player kicking for goal (1 match set penalty)
- (z) intentionally shaking, climbing or otherwise interfering with a goal or behind post (1 match set penalty)
- (aa) Failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by an umpire (2 match set penalty)
- (bb) wearing boots, jewellery and equipment prohibited under Law 9 of the AFL Laws of Australian Football (1 match set penalty)

Players are encouraged to apply for the minimum set penalty.

If the reported player has been previously suspended or reprimanded in the current or the preceding season the player shall not be able to accept the set penalty until offered by the League Secretary/ General Manager.

The League Secretary / General Manager is the only person empowered to decide, after studying a player's tribunal history whether a player can accept the minimum prescribed penalty or will be required to attend the Tribunal hearing.

If a player wishes to accept the minimum set penalty the club secretary must contact the League Manager, no later than 12 noon on the first business day immediately following the match for approval.

Such requests shall be made in writing, delivered, sent by facsimile or email to the League Secretary/ General Manager / CEO,

If the case is heard by the Tribunal or Area Appeals Board and a player is found guilty of an offence (as outlined in 1 or 3) the player may receive the prescribed set penalty as a minimum (suspended sentences can only be provided for if the prescribed set penalty is applied - i.e.. player found guilty and suspended for 3 matches for striking with 2 matches suspended, player to serve 1 match), or a reprimand (refer following).

Players may also be subject to further penalty at the discretion of the tribunal.

Reprimands

If the case is heard by the Tribunal and a player is found guilty of an offence the player may receive a reprimand. Only the offences as listed following can carry a reprimand as the minimum penalty. Reprimands can be applied where a player is found guilty of an offence as follows and any reprimand is to be determined at the Independent Tribunals discretion taking into consideration, but not limited, to a player's playing record and player's previous tribunal history.

Offences Where A Reprimand May Apply (at the discretion of the Independent Tribunal) 22.2.2
(Laws of Australian Football)

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
- (i) striking another person
- (iv) charging another person
- (v) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent
- (ix) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of an opponent
- (p) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured player.
- (x) scratching another person
- (xi) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
- (m) attempting to strike another person
- (o) attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
- (v) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language
- (w) use of an obscene gesture
- (x) engaging in time wasting
- (u) engaging in an act of staging
- (q) engaging in a melee(s) wrestling another person
- (t) pinching another person
- (y) interfering with a player kicking for goal
- (z) intentionally shaking, climbing or otherwise interfering with a goal or behind post
- (bb) wearing boots, jewellery and equipment prohibited under Law 9 of the AFL Laws of Australian Football.

2. Umpires shall report and charge any player in accordance with the normal procedures for offences listed in 1 but the report shall not be heard by a Tribunal unless so requested by either the Umpire who lodges the report, the reported player, the player allegedly offended against or the President/Secretary of either club.

If the report is not requested to be heard by a tribunal by any party named above the player is automatically given the identified set match penalty.

Such requests shall be made in writing, delivered, sent by facsimile or email to the League Secretary/General Manager, no later than 12 noon on the first business day immediately following the match.

3. Any player reported for the following offences shall appear before the League Tribunal: 22.2.2
(Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
- (ii) kicking another person
- (iii) kneeling another person
- (vi) bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that player has their

head down over the ball

(vii) Head butting or making contact to an opponent using the head

(b) eye-gouging another person

(c) stomping on another person (d) intentionally making contact with or striking an umpire

(e) attempting to strike an umpire

(f) spitting at or on an umpire

(g) behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an umpire

(l) spitting at or on another person

(cc) engaging in any other act of misconduct or serious misconduct (Note:– misconduct covers offences not covered specifically under other laws, e.g. urinating in view of spectators, exposing themselves in front of spectators, etc.)

4. These set penalties do not apply to club officials.

12.0 TREATMENT OF BLEEDING PLAYERS Please refer to the AFL Laws of Australian Football Rule 24.

13.0 FINALS ELIGIBILITY –NAB LEAGUE AND VFL PLAYERS

(a) For the purpose of finals qualification and player eligibility, the NAB League Home and Away games shall be considered the equal of AFL Victoria Country senior competition and NAB League matches shall be considered matches of the players senior AFL Victoria Country team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFL Victoria Country finals.

(b) For purposes of finals eligibility within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated league, a player who has played more than twelve (12) 1st 18 home and away games for a club affiliated with a senior state league competition in that season will not be eligible to play finals within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated competition.

14.0 COACHING ACCREDITATION

All coaches of AFL Victoria Country clubs are required to obtain Level 1 Accreditation specific to the age of the players they are coaching, prior to the commencement of the season. The penalty to be imposed by leagues if coaches continue to coach having not obtained the necessary accreditation must be

i) a \$200 fine (Senior) or \$100 fine (Junior) and

ii) the loss of match points for the matches won by the team whilst the unaccredited coach continues to coach.

In the event of no match points being received the league must apply the above fines. Fines are applied once only (\$200 or \$100) and are not applicable to every match. In the instance where coaches are not accredited and commit to completing the next available (or otherwise agreed upon) AFL Victoria Coach Accreditation Course, the following bonds for clubs are to apply \$200 (Senior) and \$100 (Junior). Where a coach fails to complete the agreed upon AFL Victoria Coach Accreditation Course the bond paid by the club is forfeited.

15.0 OFFICIAL CLUB RUNNERS/ TRAINERS/WATER CARRIERS/ PLAYERS

15.1 Eligibility / Player Eligibility

No person who is a registered player or an official of any club of an open or junior age team, who is under disqualification or suspension by his/her home club or League, shall act as an official runner or

water carrier in any competition match, or any other match in which an AFL Victoria Country affiliated club or League is participating. Any player listed on the teamsheet must be at the ground, dressed in football playing attire and ready to take the field if called upon.

Coaches

Further provided that no coach or assistant coach of an AFL Victoria Country team shall act as a runner, trainer or water carrier in a match in which the team that he/she coaches is participating.

Listing of Officials

All official runners, trainers and water carriers shall be listed on the official team sheet and for the purposes of interpretation of this regulation shall be deemed to be officials of the club for the match. All officials should be registered on Footyweb.

Number of Trainers/Water Carriers

No team shall be permitted to have more than the combined total of 6 trainers and water carriers, except were AFL Victoria Country Heat/Cold Policy is invoked.

Doctors

Registered doctors are not required to be registered as an official on the day or included on the official teamsheet.

Infringements

Any club that infringes this rule shall appear before the League's Independent Tribunal to determine the penalty. The penalty applicable for determination by the Independent Tribunal shall include the following:

- (a) Substantial fine, and/or
- (b) Loss of points for the match, and/or
- (c) Such other penalties as determined appropriate by the Tribunal.

15.2 Duties

All official runners, trainers and water carriers are to be dressed in a uniform determined by the league.

The sole duty of the runner shall be to confer with the player or players of his/her club and to immediately leave the playing arena in accordance with bylaws of the local league.

The sole duty of a water carrier shall be to convey water to players and to immediately leave the playing arena in accordance with by-laws of local league.

The duty of a trainer shall be to render medical assistance and convey water as required.

The officiating field umpire may, upon infringement of this rule, order the runner, trainer or water carrier of the offending club from the arena for a period of 15 minutes.

Any infringement of this rule or other infringement reported by the officiating umpire that shall include a field umpire, boundary umpire, goal umpire and emergency umpire, shall be referred to the leagues independent tribunal.

16.0 REPRESENTATIVE TEAM AVAILABILITY

Any AFL Victoria Country registered player who is not available for selection in an AFL Victoria Country Representative Team, without providing an adequate reason to the Selection Committee will incur a penalty of not being permitted to play in the next match in which his/her club is engaged.

17.0 CLUB TEAM NUMBERS – COMMUNITY CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUES

Championship competing leagues clubs on weekends when club matches are played in addition to Championship matches may increase the number of players per team by 2.

18.0 SERVICE AWARDS:

18.1 Recognition of Service Medallion:

Former Victorian Country Football League (VCFL) and current AFL Victoria Country affiliated leagues, clubs and umpire groups may nominate suitable persons to be recipients of the Recognition of Service Medallion, where it is desired to acknowledge outstanding service. Conditions of the award are as follows.

The award is to be made to persons who have rendered outstanding service to former VCFL and current AFL Victoria Country leagues, clubs or umpire associations/groups.

The award is to recognize an administrator or volunteer's outstanding contribution to Australian Football with a former VCFL or current AFL Victoria Country affiliate, over an extended period of time. A playing or umpiring career is not necessarily considered when assessing a nominee's qualifying status.

Nominations of people to be the recipients of the award are to be furnished through the affiliated League to the Region Manager for presentation to AFL Victoria for approval. All nominations must be lodged with the AFL Victoria Country Football Manager twenty one (21) days prior to the meeting at which such nomination will be considered.

A record of the service rendered by the nominated person is to be forwarded with each application for issue of the medallion. Unless the conditions of nominating for a Recognition of Service Medallion have been observed Recognition of Service Medallions will only be approved under extenuating circumstances.

19.0 PERCENTAGE WHEN CLUB FORFEITS

Percentage calculation for forfeited matches –

(a) Where a team forfeits during the progress of a match.

(b) Where a team fails to appear.

References (a) and (b) – See AFL Laws of Australian Football 11.2

(c) Where a match result is altered by protest or dispute.

Reference (c) – The team winning the protest or dispute to be awarded full premiership list points and their points scored FOR in such match to be recorded as usual in the calculation of percentage. The offending team shall lose their points scored FOR in such match and as such the calculation of their percentage adjusted accordingly. Scores for the match are to be adjusted following that round of matches.

The AFL Victoria Country rule to be read in conjunction with AFL Law 11.2.2 (b) – please note AFL Victoria Country has been granted an exemption to Law 10.7.2 (b) and the AFL Victoria Country rule is to be applied in all cases.

20.0 LEAGUES

20.1 Major Leagues:

For the purposes of AFL Victoria Country permit regulations the following are classed as major leagues; Ballarat Football League, Bendigo Football League, Goulburn Valley Football League, Hampden Football League, Mornington Peninsula Nepean Football League, North Central Football

League, Ovens and Murray Football League, Gippsland League, Sunraysia Football League, Wimmera Football League, Murray Football League, Bellarine Football League, Geelong Football League, AFL Outer East Football League and the Central Murray Football League. At a September/October meeting of AFL Victoria the Major Leagues for the next Season shall be named.

20.2 District Leagues:

All other affiliated Football bodies shall be known as the District Leagues.

20.3 Junior Leagues

All affiliated football bodies that provide for football competitions at under 16 and a half or lower age groups or as determined by the local Regional Commission only shall be known as the Junior Leagues.

Resolution – Age grouping determination:

It is the responsibility of AFL Victoria Country and or Commission to set, or approve any changes in the age grouping structure within an Area or Commission, in consultation with affected leagues.

21.0 UMPIRES

21.1 Registration:

Field Umpires officiating at matches under the control of affiliated Leagues supplied by an official umpiring association shall be registered with, and required to pay an annual registration fee to the Regional Commission. Those not supplied from an official umpiring association body shall register with respective League under such conditions as are from time to time determined by the League. It shall be permissible for umpires so registered with the League to be appointed and officiate in an area other than that for which the Region Manager acts in AFL Victoria Country. The fees and expenses of AFL Victoria Country umpires are to be submitted annually to AFL Victoria by Community Umpiring Manager for approval and adoption.

21.2 Umpires as Players:

Members of recognised Umpires Groups and registered umpires of AFL Victoria Country forfeit all rights as a registered player and shall be ineligible to play during the current season of registration unless approval has been granted by the Region Manager before the 1st July, and furthermore he must comply with the domestic requirements of his League as a player.

21.3 Players as Umpires:

Notwithstanding rule 23.2 Umpires as Players, a registered player will be permitted to officiate as an umpire in any affiliated League or association provided approval has been granted by the League concerned and the player is not under disqualification. Leagues must liaise with umpires associations in cases where this rule is applied.

21.4 Approaches to Umpires:

Only the team captain shall be permitted to speak to Field Umpire during the progress of a match at intervals. Any player or official in breach of this rule shall be reported by the Umpire and the matter referred to the league independent tribunal and if found guilty their club shall incur the following maximum penalty:

1st offence \$100.00

2nd offence \$200.00

3rd or any further offence \$400.00

22.0 DOMESTIC MATTERS

Subject to the provision herein applied, each League or AFL Regional Commission shall have power to draw up rules not inconsistent with these Rules and provide for the management of its own domestic affairs. In the event of conflict between AFL Victoria Country Regulations and rules, and all amendments to its rules AFL Victoria Country Regulations will take precedence.

23.0 INTERPRETATIONS OR RULINGS FROM REGION MANAGERS

23.1 Questions not Provided for:

In the event of any question arising not provided for in these Rules, AFL Victoria shall have power to decide such question.

23.2 Decisions of AFL Victoria:

All decisions arrived at by AFL Victoria shall be final. Where the question of interpretation or ruling is involved in connection with appeals, disputes, etc., it is desired that the League or the competent authority concerned obtain such interpretation or ruling on AFL Victoria Country Rules and/ or Regulations from, or through, the appropriate Region Managers or AFL Victoria.

23.3 Authority –Region Manager or AFL Regional Commission:

The, Region Manager or AFL Regional Commission may make decisions in that area providing that they are not in contradiction to the Rules, Regulations and Resolutions of AFL Victoria Country.

24.0 LICENSING

24.1 Each player in each team of each Club shall wear a uniform (including without limitation guernseys and shorts) that:

- (a) complies with the minimum standards of quality and appearance and layout for uniforms as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- (b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time), in a manner and on a location on each item of the uniform as specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

24.2 Each Umpire of each Match shall wear a uniform (including without limitation guernseys and shorts) that:

- (a) complies with the minimum standards of quality and appearance and layout for uniforms as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- (b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time), in a manner and on a location on each item of the uniform as specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

24.3 Each Club and League shall ensure that the football used in any match:

- (a) complies with the minimum standards of quality for footballs as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- (b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time) in a manner and on a location on the match football as is specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

24.4 Each Club shall ensure that its players comply with this regulation.

24.5 Each League shall ensure that any affiliated Clubs comply with this regulation.

24.6 Sanction: A sanction of up to \$50 for a player wearing an incorrect uniform in each senior grade match, up to a maximum of \$500 per team per match. A sanction of up to \$50 for any Umpire wearing an incorrect uniform in any Match. A sanction of up to \$50 where an incorrect football is used in a senior grade match. A sanction for non-compliance with this regulation by any other teams (including junior teams), Clubs or Leagues as determined by AFL Victoria Country on a case by case basis, upon the recommendation by AFL Victoria Country Football Manager or Region Manager. Any sanction shall be payable to AFL Victoria Country.

25.0 DOPING POLICY

The Doping Policy of the Australian Football League for the time being in force, shall apply to and be binding upon all Leagues, Associations and Bodies affiliated with the AFL, or affiliated with an Affiliated body of the AFL (refer Anti-Doping Messages for Community Leagues on AFL Vic Country website under Community Football/Policies).

26.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

All Affiliated Leagues and Clubs are directed to introduce appropriate Risk Management procedures as outlined in the Risk Management Manual ("Policy"). All affiliated members of AFL Victoria Country are to adopt this policy and use of the app as outlined in the Marsh National Risk Protection Programme.

27.0 AFL AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL MATCH POLICY

(a) AFL Victoria Country has adopted the AFL Australian Football Match Policy for junior affiliated leagues. Any Junior leagues wishing to adopt by-laws that are not consistent with the AFL Australian Football Match Policy must obtain approval from the Region Manager.

(b) Female Football

AFL Victoria Country has adopted the AFL Female Community Football Guidelines for junior and youth girls football competitions. Any junior and youth girls competitions affiliated to AFL Victoria Country leagues wishing to adopt bylaws not consistent with the AFL Female Football Match Guide must obtain approval from their local Region Manager.

28.0 CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

AFL Victoria commits to the safety and well being of all children. Affiliated leagues and clubs are to implement Child Safe Guideline practices as determined by AFL Victoria from time to time.

29.0 PLAYERS EXCEEDING PERMITTED NUMBER

Please refer to the Laws of the Game – Players Exceeding Permitted Number.

30 VARIATION OF TIME

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules and Regulations, where any time limit is imposed for the doing of any act or thing or for any other purpose, AFL Victoria Community Football Manager may in his/her absolute discretion extend or bring forward the time within which a person may do any act or thing under these Rules & Regulations.

NATIONAL PLAYER REGISTRATION & TRANSFER REGULATIONS



February 2020



NATIONAL PLAYER REGISTRATION & TRANSFER REGULATIONS – TABLE OF CONTENTS

NATIONAL PLAYER REGISTRATION & TRANSFER REGULATIONS	1
1 APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION	3
1.1 Application	3
1.2 Disputes	3
2 DEFINITIONS	3
3. NATIONAL PLAYER REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER REGULATIONS	7
3.1 REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER PROCESS	7
3.2 REFUSALS	7
3.3 TRANSFER WITHDRAWALS	8
3.4 SUSPENDED PLAYERS	8
3.5 APPEALS OF TRANSFER REFUSALS	9
3.6 TRANSFER FEE	10
3.7 REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER PERIODS	10
3.8 PLAYER AGE GROUP ELIGIBILITY	10
3.9 MULTIPLE COMPETITIONS	11
3.10 MISLEADING OR INCORRECT INFORMATION	11
3.11 INTERCHANGE AGREEMENT	11
3.12 PERMITS	11
3.13 PLAYER DECLARATIONS	11
3.14 JUNIOR PLAYERS	13
3.15 PRACTICE AND TRIAL MATCHES	13
3.16 STATE FOOTBALL BODY RESPONSIBLE	13
3.17 24 MONTH RULE	13
3.18 SEPARATE AGREEMENTS	14
3.19 TEAM IN ANOTHER TIER 1 LEAGUE	14
3.20 NORTHERN TERRITORY FOOTBALL LEAGUE (NTFL)	14
3.21 STATE AFFILIATION – TIER 2 LEAGUES	14
3.22 TRANSFER OF PLAYERS TO THE AFL COMPETITION	15
3.23 PERMIT COMMITTEE	15
3.24 GENERAL	16

1 APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION

These National Player Registration and Transfer Regulations (**Regulations**) set out the national framework of rules and regulations in relation to the transfer of players within Australian football.

The purpose of the Regulations is to ensure player registration and movement within and between Australian Football Bodies is fair, transparent and consistent. The Regulations should be adopted by each Football Body to achieve this purpose and ensure best practice in relation to the transfer and registration of Australian football players.

1.1 Application

- 1.1.1 These Regulations should be adopted, implemented and enforced by each Football Body.
- 1.1.2 The Football Body should make such amendments to its constitution, rules, regulations or by-laws as may be necessary for these Regulations to be enforceable.
- 1.1.3 These Regulations apply to and are binding on all Football Bodies, Clubs and players, and these Regulations prevail to the extent of any inconsistency between these Regulations and any other rule or policy applicable to a Football Body, Club or player.
- 1.1.4 The Regulations do not apply to the AFL Competitions or any secondary AFL competitions such as the AFL 9s competition.

1.2 Disputes

- 1.2.1 Disputes in relation to the application or interpretation of the Regulations between:
 - (a) State Football Bodies should be submitted to the AFL General Manager in writing for determination. The decision of the AFL is final and binding on the applicable State Football Bodies.
 - (b) Leagues within the same State should be submitted in writing to the relevant State Football Body for determination in accordance with the rules and regulations of the applicable State Football Body. The decision of the State Football Body is final and binding on the applicable Leagues.
 - (c) Leagues from different States should be submitted in writing to each relevant State Football Body for determination in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Football Body. Where the State Football Bodies cannot reach agreement, the dispute will be forwarded to the AFL General Manager for decision, which decision is final and binding on the applicable Leagues.

2 DEFINITIONS

AFL means Australian Football League ACN 004 155 211 of 140 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands, Victoria 3008.

AFL Competition (or **AFL Competitions**) means one or both of the elite national men's or women's competitions (as the context dictates).

AFL Competition Club means a club currently fielding a team in one or both of the AFL Competitions.

AFL Primary Listed Player means a player currently listed by an AFL Competition Club under the AFL Rules.

AFL Rookie Listed Player means a player who is listed on the rookie list of an AFL Competition Club.

AFL Rules means the 'Laws of Australian Football' and all associated policies and guidelines, updated by the AFL from time to time.

Australian Football Match Policy means the AFL's Australian football match policy (or any replacement of it) as updated by the AFL from time to time.

Business Day means each day of the week including public holidays save for a Saturday or Sunday.

Club means an Australian football club fielding a team within a competition conducted by a Football Body.

Declared Player means a player who has a current, valid Standard Player Declaration.

Destination Club means the Club to which a player is Transferring.

Football Body means a football body conducting Australian football competitions including the State Football Bodies, Tier 1 Leagues, Tier 2 Leagues and Unaffiliated Football Bodies, as the context dictates.

Footyweb means the AFL's online competition management system currently operated by SportsTG designed to assist Football Bodies with the management of their competitions and membership data.

Former Club means the Club from which a player is Transferring.

General Manager means the person appointed by the AFL from time to time to the position of General Manager of Game and Market Development (or its equivalent) or their nominee.

Interchange Agreement means an agreement between two or more Leagues to allow players to play under a permit between those Leagues.

Junior Player means a player under 18 years of age as at 31 December in the year prior to the applicable playing year.

League means a Tier 1 League and/or Tier 2 League as the context dictates.

Local Interchange Permit means, subject to completion of an Interchange Agreement, a permit (Type 2) allowing a player to play for a Club (other than the one to which the player is registered) subject to home Club approval via Footyweb.

Match-Day Permit means a permit (Type 1) allowing a player to play a single match for a Club (other than the one to which the player is registered) but which does not require home Club approval via Footyweb.

National Under 18 Championships means the under 18 championships conducted as part of the AFL's official Junior Player AFL Competition pathway program.

NTFL means the Northern Territory Football League.

Permit means the forms or process required to make a player eligible to play in competitions conducted by a League other than the one with which the player is presently registered, and for the avoidance of doubt includes Local Interchange Permit, a Match-Day Permit and a Temporary Transfer.

Permit Committee means a committee appointed pursuant to Regulation 3.23.

Player Payment Rules means the community club sustainability player payment rules of a relevant Football Body (if applicable) including any player point policy (as applicable).

Practice or Trial Match means a match between two Clubs, not forming part of the official match program of the competition in which the Clubs compete.

Regulations means these National Player Registration and Transfer Regulations as amended by the AFL from time to time.

Standard Player Declaration means:

- (a) the standard player declaration in the form attached at Appendix 1; or
- (b) such other form as approved for use in a State's Tier 1 League or Tier 2 League by the relevant State Football Body,

(as applicable) which sets out certain details of a player's current arrangement to play for a Club or AFL Competition Club.

State means each State in the Commonwealth of Australia including the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. For the avoidance of doubt, NSW and the Australian Capital Territory will be treated as a single State being NSW/ACT.

State Football Body means the governing State and Territory Football Bodies affiliated with the AFL as follows:

- (a) AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Limited (ACN 086 839 385);
- (b) AFL QLD Limited (ABN 66 090 629 342);
- (c) AFL Northern Territory Limited (ACN 134 092 854);
- (d) Football Tasmania Limited (ACN 085 213 350);

- (e) Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited (ACN 147 664 579);
- (f) South Australian National Football League Inc (ABN 59 518 757 737); and
- (g) West Australian Football Commission Inc (51 167 923 136).

Temporary Transfer means a player who has temporarily transferred to or from the Northern Territory Football League for a maximum of one (1) season in accordance with these Regulations.

Tier 1 League means the tier 1 Leagues which conduct and administer the senior grade, reserve grade and under 18 Australian football competitions as follows:

- (a) South Australian National Football League;
- (b) Victorian Football League;
- (c) TAC Cup;
- (d) West Australian Football League;
- (e) North East Australian Football League; and
- (f) Tasmanian State League.

Tier 2 League means all other Leagues which conduct and administer Australian football competitions (other than the AFL Competition, Tier 1 Leagues or AFL 9s competitions).

Transfer means the process of moving a player from one Club to another Club in accordance with these Regulations, and Transferring and Transferred have cognate meanings.

Transfer Request means an official transfer request which has been initiated by a Destination Club on Footyweb.

Unaffiliated Football Body means a body (including a Football Body, League, Club or other body) that conducts, administers and/or participates in an Australian football competition not formally affiliated to the AFL or a State Football Body or League.

Undeclared Player means a player other than a Declared Player who is not less than 18 years old and:

- (a) who is registered and has played with a Club of a Tier 1 League in the past 12 months;
- (b) who is not registered with a Club of a Tier 1 League but has played for a Club of a Tier 1 League within the preceding 12 months; or
- (c) who has not registered or played with a Club of a Tier 1 League but has played for a State Football Body in the National Under 18 Championships within the preceding 12 months.

3. NATIONAL PLAYER REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER REGULATIONS

3.1 REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER PROCESS

- 3.1.1. All player registrations must be submitted electronically via Footyweb by the player or, where the player is under 18 years of age as of 31 December in the year prior to the year of registration, the registration must be submitted by the player's parent or legal guardian.
- 3.1.2. For the registration to be active, the Club must accept the player's registration via Footyweb.
- 3.1.3. Clubs must not register a player without the player's consent.
- 3.1.4. A Transfer must be initiated by the Destination Club by logging into Footyweb and submitting a Transfer Request.
- 3.1.5. Each Transfer Request must be completed and lodged by the Destination Club. Clubs must not transfer a player without the player's consent (which can only be done once that player or, in the case of a player under the age of eighteen (18) years, that player's parent or legal guardian, accepts the transfer in Footyweb in accordance with Regulation 3.1.9(b)).
- 3.1.6. The Former Club has six (6) Business Days, commencing from when the Transfer Request is electronically submitted through Footyweb, to approve or refuse the Transfer Request.
- 3.1.7. If the Former Club approves the Transfer within six (6) Business Days from lodgement of the Transfer Request, the Transfer Request will be approved in Footyweb.
- 3.1.8. If the Former Club does not approve or refuse the Transfer Request within six (6) Business Days from lodgement of the Transfer Request via Footyweb, the Transfer the subject of the Transfer Request will occur automatically following the expiry of the six (6) Business Days.
- 3.1.9. Once a Transfer Request has been approved pursuant to Regulation 3.1.7 or 3.1.8:
 - (a) the playing history, including the tribunal record, of the player will be automatically sent to the Football Body to which the Destination Club is affiliated, via Footyweb. The Football Body to which the Destination Club is affiliated will promptly notify the player and the Destination Club by email upon approval of the Transfer Request; and
 - (b) the player will be "pending" in Footyweb and ineligible to be entered into a team sheet and play for the Destination Club until the player or, in the case of a player under the age of eighteen (18) years, the player's parent or guardian, has provided consent to the player's registration at the Destination Club in Footyweb, after which the player record on Footyweb will be "active" and the player will be eligible to be entered into a team sheet and play for the Destination Club.
- 3.1.10. Should a Club complete the Transfer Request incorrectly, the relevant Football Body may deal with the player or Club as it deems fit in accordance with the Football Body's rules and regulations.
- 3.1.11. For the avoidance of doubt, a Transfer is subject to Regulation 3.4 (suspended players).

3.2 REFUSALS

- 3.2.1 A Former Club may refuse a Transfer Request within six (6) Business Days from lodgement of the application via Footyweb.

- 3.2.2 Subject to Regulation 3.2.3, a refusal can only occur where a Club can substantiate that the player:
- (a) is a Declared Player whose current player arrangement requires the player to continue to play for the Club (as substantiated in accordance with Regulation 3.2.4); or
 - (b) is indebted to the Club; or
 - (c) is in possession of Club property (e.g. jumper) that needs to be returned; or
 - (d) wishes to withdraw their Transfer Request. Clubs can only submit this as a reason for refusal where the player has completed and lodged the player withdrawal of transfer form via Footyweb in accordance with Regulation 3.3 below; or
 - (e) any combination of the circumstances in (a) – (d).
- 3.2.3 Without limiting Regulation 3.2.4, once 24 months have elapsed since a Club initially refused a Transfer Request, the circumstances described in Regulation 3.2.2(b) and (c) are not valid grounds for refusing a Transfer Request.
- 3.2.4 A Club refusing to Transfer a player must provide evidence (written documentation acknowledged by both parties) in order to substantiate the refusal upon request by its affiliate Football Body within three (3) Business Days of the request. Failure to provide such evidence may result in the Football Body re-opening and approving the Transfer.
- 3.2.5 For the avoidance of doubt:
- (a) Clubs (and if applicable, Leagues) must only refuse a player Transfer on grounds expressly set out in Regulation 3.2.2 or elsewhere in these Regulations; and
 - (b) a State Football Body may in its discretion override any rule or other mechanism of a Club or League relating to registration of players where in the reasonable opinion of the State Football Body the relevant rule or mechanism is contrary to the purpose of these Regulations.

3.3 TRANSFER WITHDRAWALS

- 3.3.1 A player or Club wishing to withdraw a Transfer Request must do so in writing to the relevant affiliate Football Body (i.e. the Football Body to which player was originally registered) in accordance with this Regulation 3.3.
- 3.3.2 A Transfer withdrawal must be submitted within six (6) Business Days from the date on which the Transfer Request was lodged. For the avoidance of doubt, if a Transfer Request is approved by the Former Club before the player or Destination Club lodges a transfer withdrawal, the player is not eligible for a transfer withdrawal.

3.4 SUSPENDED PLAYERS

- 3.4.1 A player under suspension by a Football Body can Transfer to another Club/Football Body (**First Transfer**) but must not play a match with that Destination Club until the player has completed the player's suspension and the player cannot subsequently transfer (i.e. a second consecutive transfer) to a further Club/Football Body until 28 days after the First Transfer.
- 3.4.2 Suspended players seeking a Transfer from winter competitions to summer competitions and vice versa must refer to Law 21.4.4 of the Laws of Australian Football, as amended from time to time.

3.5 APPEALS OF TRANSFER REFUSALS

- 3.5.1 Where the player disputes the reason for a Transfer refusal, the player or the Destination Club should resolve the dispute with the Former Club. Where a dispute between the parties cannot be resolved, the player or the Destination Club may appeal against the refusal of Transfer in accordance with the relevant Football Body's appeal procedure.
- 3.5.2 An appeal involving Clubs associated with the same Football Body will be heard by the Football Body's appeals tribunal (in accordance with the appeals procedure for the respective Football Body).
- 3.5.3 An appeal involving Clubs from two different Football Bodies within the same State will be heard in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Football Body to which the Football Bodies are domiciled.
- 3.5.4 An appeal involving Clubs from two different States will be referred to the Permit Committee for resolution in accordance with the procedure set out in Regulation 3.23.
- 3.5.5 If a Football Body does not have an appeals process in place, the following rules will apply in relation to an appeal of a Transfer refusal:
- (a) A player or Destination Club who has been refused a Transfer may appeal (Appellant) to the relevant State Football Body's independent panel (Panel) by notice in writing lodged with the State Football Body.
 - (b) The appeal must be lodged within ten (10) Business Days of the notice of refusal being received by the Destination Club.
 - (c) The notice of appeal must include all relevant details which the Appellant requires the Panel to take into account including details of the player transfer refusal.
 - (d) The State Football Body shall inform each affected Football Body of the appeal as soon as practical after lodgement by the Appellant of its notice of appeal.
 - (e) The Appellant must pay a bond of \$550 (including GST) to the State Football Body and such bond may be forfeited should the appeal be considered vexatious or frivolous by the Panel. A \$275 (including GST) administrative fee will be retained by the State Football Body from the Appellant's appeal bond.
 - (f) The Former Club (Defendant) must also lodge a bond of \$550 (including GST) and such bond may be forfeited should the defence be considered vexatious or frivolous by the Panel. A \$275 (including GST) administrative fee will be retained by the State Football Body from the Defendant's appeal bond.
 - (g) The Defendant must lodge its defence against the appeal in writing and include all relevant details which the Defendant requires the Panel to take into account together with details of the player transfer refusal.
 - (h) Should the Defendant fail to lodge with the State Football Body:
 - (i) a defence in writing pursuant to Regulation 3.5.5(g) within four (4) days of being notified of the appeal by the State Football Body; and

- (ii) the bond of \$550 (including GST) within six (6) days of being notified of the appeal details by the State Football Body;

it shall be deemed to have granted the Transfer.

- (i) The parties shall each be entitled to representation at an appeal hearing.
- (j) An appeal in accordance with Regulation 3.5.4 shall be heard as soon as practicable within a period as determined by the Panel.
- (k) The deadlines for the lodgement of the defence and bond payment by a Defendant pursuant to Regulation 3.5.5(h) apply unless otherwise advised in writing by the State Football Body.
- (l) The Panel may regulate the proceedings before it as it deems fit and the decision of the Panel (to approve or deny the Transfer Request) is final and binding on all parties.

3.6 TRANSFER FEE

Without limiting any Player Payment Rules which may apply to a Club or Football Body, neither a Club nor Football Body shall directly or indirectly receive or pay any monetary amount or any other consideration in respect of or in connection with the Transfer of a player subject to these Regulations.

3.7 REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER PERIODS

- 3.7.1 A Transfer Request may be lodged between 1 November to 30 November or 1 February to 30 June in each calendar year (**Transfer Periods**).
- 3.7.2 Subject to Regulation 3.7.5, no Transfer Requests (including Temporary Transfers from the NTFL) shall be lodged after 11.59pm (AEST) on 30 November or 30 June in each year.
- 3.7.3 The above Transfer Period does not apply to the NTFL competition where the season is primarily conducted from October to March each year.
- 3.7.4 The player registration period for each season commences on 1 November prior to the beginning of each season.
- 3.7.5 In exceptional circumstances a State Body may approve an intrastate Transfer (or the relevant State Bodies may jointly approve an interstate Transfer) after 30 June in each year.

3.8 PLAYER AGE GROUP ELIGIBILITY

- 3.8.1 The minimum age for a player to be eligible to register with a Football Body in any year will be in accordance with the Australian Football Match Policy as published and amended by the AFL from time to time.
- 3.8.2 A player's age group shall be based on a player's age as at 31 December in the year prior to the applicable playing year. For example, if a player is 11 years of age as at 31 December 2019 then that player's playing age group for the 2020 calendar year will be Under 12s (assuming single age groups).
- 3.8.3 A Football Body that extends the age of a competition must retain 31 December in the year prior to the applicable playing year as the age determination date. E.g. for an Under 18 ½ competition in 2020, the age determination date shall be extended back to 30 June 2019, thus allowing the player to be 18 ½ on 31 December 2019.

3.9 MULTIPLE COMPETITIONS

Subject to these Regulations, the Australian Football Match Policy and any applicable legislation, a player 15 years of age or older shall not be eligible to participate in both a male competition (or competitions) and a female competition (or competitions) concurrently or interchangeably.

3.10 MISLEADING OR INCORRECT INFORMATION

- 3.10.1 Any player not properly registered (including any player registered based upon incorrect or insufficient information), will be ineligible to play in competition matches.
- 3.10.2 Any player who submits incorrect information or who intentionally fails to disclose information on any registration form or in relation to any Transfer Request may, as determined by the applicable State Football Body in its absolute discretion, be:
- (a) subject to disciplinary sanctions; or
 - (b) retrospectively deemed or determined to have been ineligible for any competition matches in which they have played.
- 3.10.3 Any Club Official or Club that causes or contributes to a breach of Regulation 3.10.2 may also be sanctioned by the relevant Football Body in its absolute discretion.

3.11 INTERCHANGE AGREEMENT

- 3.11.1 A Football Body may enter into an Interchange Agreement with another Football Body at the discretion of the relevant Football Bodies. A copy of the Interchange Agreement must be lodged with the relevant State Football Bodies within ten (10) days of its execution. Interchange Agreements cannot be entered between Tier 1 League Clubs, excluding the North East Australian Football League.
- 3.11.2 All Interchange Agreements must be in place by 30 June in each year.
- 3.11.3 Once an Interchange Agreement has been lodged with, and approved by, the State Football Body it will be considered ongoing unless revoked by the State Football Body or one of the Football Bodies party to the Interchange Agreement by advising the State Football Body.

3.12 PERMITS

- 3.12.1 An Interchange Agreement must be in place in accordance with Regulation 3.11 above, prior to requesting a Local Interchange Permit.
- 3.12.2 Permits are to be applied in accordance with the respective State Football Body rules, regulations or by-laws and it is the responsibility of the relevant Football Body to monitor the application and management of Permits.

3.13 PLAYER DECLARATIONS

- 3.13.1 Clubs should use the Standard Playing Declaration (as updated by the AFL from time to time).
- 3.13.2 State Football Bodies may, in addition to any other information or documentation which must be provided to the State Football Body in accordance with the State Football Body's applicable rules, also require Clubs to provide a copy of each player's current, accurate, completed and signed Standard Player Declaration.

- 3.13.3 Notwithstanding the form of playing agreement (if any) used by a particular Club, it is the responsibility of the Club and each player to ensure all player payments required to be made pursuant to any playing agreement are made in accordance with:
- (a) the Player Payment Rules (if applicable);
 - (b) the current, accurate, completed and signed Standard Player Declaration; and
 - (c) all other State and Commonwealth laws.
- 3.13.4 The following guidelines will also apply to the Standard Player Declaration:
- (a) A player must be at least 18 years old to sign the Standard Player Declaration (or if under 18 must have the Standard Player Declaration signed by a parent or guardian);
 - (b) For a Standard Player Declaration to be valid both the Club and the player must sign the declaration; and
 - (c) Subject to Regulation 3.13.5, all Standard Player Declarations expire on 31 October each year.
- 3.13.5 Standard Player Declarations that are:
- (a) expressed to be valid for more than one year will expire on 31 October in the final year of the declaration; and
 - (b) executed between a player and a Club in the Northern Territory Football League expire on 31 March in the final year of the declaration.
- 3.13.6 A Standard Player Declaration will remain effective until the expiration, update or replacement of the Standard Player Declaration, unless the Former Club releases the player from the Standard Player Declaration.
- 3.13.7 A Tier 1 League Club or AFL Competition standard player contract will take precedence over a Tier 2 League Club Standard Player Declaration should the player wish to pursue their career at a Tier 1 League or in the AFL Competition, however should the player be released from a Tier 1 League or AFL Competition Standard Player Declaration within the time constraints of the Tier 2 League Standard Player Declaration the player will still be bound to that Tier 2 League Club until the Tier 2 League Standard Player Declaration expires.
- 3.13.8 A Tier 1 League which by any means permits a Declared Player of another Tier 1 League to play in a Club of its State without the consent in writing of the Club to which the player is registered or is otherwise in breach of these Regulations shall be liable to a penalty determined by the Permit Committee but not exceeding \$5,000 and may be dealt with by the Permit Committee as if it had been guilty of conduct prejudicial to the interest of Australian football.
- 3.13.9 If there is a dispute in relation to Regulation 3.13 including between a player and a Former Tier 1 League as to whether that player is a Declared Player or is not a Declared Player the player's Former Tier 1 League may refer the dispute to the Permit Committee for determination.
- 3.13.10 If a Tier 1 Club listed player plays with a Tier 2 Club in an official competition match, then unless that player:
- (a) has been officially released by their Tier 1 Club; or

- (b) has done so pursuant to the rules of the relevant Tier 1 League including any applicable Player Interchange Agreement,

that player will be deemed ineligible by their Tier 2 League and that player and the relevant Tier 2 Club may be subject to disciplinary sanctions imposed by the Tier 2 League.

3.14 JUNIOR PLAYERS

3.14.1 Junior Players resident in one State may not be recruited or registered with a Tier 1 League in another State without the approval of the Permit Committee. Such approval may only be granted where the Junior Player concerned has:

- (a) transferred interstate with his/her family;
- (b) undergone a bona fide transfer of employment to another State;
- (c) enrolled in a tertiary education course in another State;
- (d) the support of the AFL's National Development Manager (or equivalent), in the interests of developing his/her football career; or
- (e) any other matter in the Permit Committee's discretion.

3.15 PRACTICE AND TRIAL MATCHES

3.15.1 A Tier 1 Declared or Undeclared Player shall not be permitted to play in a Practice or Trial Match with a Club of another State without the consent in writing of the Club with which the player is registered to play football.

3.15.2 A Tier 1 League is liable to a sanction determined by the Permit Committee but not exceeding \$5,000 for each offence where an associated Club breaches this Regulation 3.15.

3.16 STATE FOOTBALL BODY RESPONSIBLE

Where a Tier 1 League is separately constituted the Football Body to which it is affiliated shall be responsible for ensuring that the Tier 1 League concerned observes and complies with these Regulations.

3.17 24 MONTH RULE

3.17.1 A player who has not played competitive football in the previous 24 months and wishes to play at another Club can apply for registration with that Club at any time. The player's Former Club cannot object to the Transfer under any circumstances.

3.17.2 Should the Destination Club lodge the relevant Transfer Request within the Transfer Periods, the player will be registered with the Destination Club using the normal Footyweb Transfer process.

3.17.3 Should the Destination Club lodge the relevant Transfer Request outside of the Transfer Periods, only the destination League that the player intends to register with can process the registration using the Footyweb Transfer process.

3.18 SEPARATE AGREEMENTS

- 3.18.1 A Tier 1 League may enter into an agreement with any other Tier 1 League, concerning the Transfer of players between those Leagues.
- 3.18.2 A copy of any such agreement is to be lodged with the General Manager by 1 February or within six (6) Business Days of making such agreement if made between 1 February and 30 September.
- 3.18.3 A Tier 1 League may enter into an agreement with the AFL concerning the Transfer of players from that Tier 1 League to the AFL Competition.
- 3.18.4 Each such agreement shall for all purposes be regarded as valid and subsisting unless otherwise declared by a Court and if the provisions of any such agreement are inconsistent with these Regulations the agreement shall prevail.
- 3.18.5 Once such an agreement between Tier 1 Leagues has been lodged with, and approved by, the relevant State Football Bodies it will be considered ongoing unless revoked by one of the State Football Bodies or Football Bodies who are a party to the agreement.

3.19 TEAM IN ANOTHER TIER 1 LEAGUE

Where a team located in one State (**State A**) is admitted to a Tier 1 League of another State (**State B**), the players of the team from State A will be considered players from the State in which the team is based, that being State A.

3.20 NORTHERN TERRITORY FOOTBALL LEAGUE (NTFL)

- 3.20.1 Players may Transfer to or from the NTFL via a Temporary Transfer using Footyweb. Such players shall remain registered with the League from which they have received the Temporary Transfer.
- 3.20.2 Temporary Transfers are valid for one (1) season only. Players wishing to continue on a Temporary Transfer basis will be required to complete a new Footyweb application for each subsequent season.
- 3.20.3 Where a Tier 1 League Club recruits a player on a Temporary Transfer, the Tier 1 League shall be responsible for ensuring that the player participates with the Club for one (1) season only.
- 3.20.4 Where a player has played under a Temporary Transfer and has not played or made themselves available for selection for more than five (5) home and away matches for a period of twenty-four (24) months, the player must procure a Destination Club to lodge a Transfer Request through Footyweb for any subsequent transfer.
- 3.20.5 Where players are drafted as an AFL Primary Listed Player or Rookie Listed Player during the period of the Temporary Transfer, they shall be regarded as having been recruited from the Former Club of the League granting the Temporary Transfer.

3.21 STATE AFFILIATION – TIER 2 LEAGUES

Tier 2 Leagues with two thirds or more of their Clubs domiciled in a State shall be required to affiliate with the Football Body recognised by the AFL as responsible for the region concerned and to process Transfer of players accordingly.

3.22 TRANSFER OF PLAYERS TO THE AFL COMPETITION

- 3.22.1 Declared or Undeclared Players of Tier 1 or 2 Leagues are automatically registered to an AFL Competition Club upon becoming an AFL Primary Listed Player or AFL Rookie Listed Player.
- 3.22.2 Upon registration with the AFL Competition Club, the player may interchange with a Tier 1 League Club at the discretion of the player's AFL Competition Club provided that such interchange conforms to applicable Transfer Regulations of the Tier 1 League concerned.
- 3.22.3 Should a player be listed as an AFL Primary Listed Player by an AFL Competition Club located in a State different to that player's Tier 1 League Club, they may play with a Tier 1 League Club in that State (i.e. the new State). In the event that a player is delisted the player will be regarded as a player of the player's original Tier 1 League.
- 3.22.4 For the purposes of these Regulations an AFL Primary Listed Player demoted to an AFL Rookie Listed Player shall continue to be regarded as an AFL Primary Listed Player.
- 3.22.5 A player who is delisted by an AFL Competition Club who returns to play for a Club of the Tier 1 League from which the player was drafted will be bound by any applicable Transfer Regulations and registration rules of that Tier 1 League if player desires to play football for a Club of that Tier 1 League other than the Club with which the player was registered at the time of delisting.
- 3.22.6 Where a player is delisted as an AFL Primary Listed Player or AFL Rookie Listed Player and becomes an AFL Rookie Listed Player of another AFL Competition Club for the following AFL Competition season that player shall be regarded as having continuous AFL Competition registration.

3.23 PERMIT COMMITTEE

- 3.23.1 A Permit Committee comprising three (3) members shall be appointed by the General Manager or their nominee and shall hold office until replaced by the General Manager or their nominee.
- 3.23.2 The General Manager or their nominee may revoke Permit Committee appointments at any time.
- 3.23.3 The Permit Committee shall hold the following powers and responsibilities:
 - (a) mediate State Football Body disputes as they arise and provide final judgement where required in accordance with the processes set out in Regulation 3.5.5 For the avoidance of doubt, where the nature of the dispute means that the processes in Regulation 3.5.5 are unnecessary, inappropriate, or for any other reason, the Permit Committee may dispense with any one or more requirements of Regulation 3.5.5 in its absolute discretion;
 - (b) consider and determine interstate Transfer Requests lodged by Destination Clubs in relation to Junior Players under Regulation 3.14;
 - (c) consult with State Football Bodies on any proposed amendment to these Regulations;
 - (d) make such recommendations to the AFL for amendments to these Regulations as may be approved by not less than six (6) State Football Bodies;
 - (e) determine matters raised under Regulation 3.13.6. and 3.15.2; or
 - (f) any other matters pursuant to these Regulations as determined by the AFL General Manager.

3.24 GENERAL

Any matter of any kind whatsoever not dealt with or provided for in these Regulations may be dealt in such a manner as the relevant State Football Body or the AFL deems fit.

Appendix 1: Standard Player Declaration

NAME, CLUB AND LEAGUE

This Declaration is made by: ('the Player')

Of: Football Club ('the Club')

An affiliated club of the: Football League ('the League')

Affiliated with: ('State Football Body')

VALIDITY PERIOD Valid until: / /

PLAYER PAYMENTS (strike through where not applicable)

Per senior match won: \$ Per senior match lost or drawn: \$

Per non-senior match won: \$ Per non-senior match lost or drawn: \$

Incentives: \$ for

Deductions from match pay: Annual subs: \$ Social functions: \$

Club property: \$ Other: \$

Coaching (if applicable): \$ for

Other payments: \$ for

DATE FOR PAYMENT Weekly Monthly Other (describe):

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS I volunteer in the football and other Club activities as a hobby or pastime.

(strike through where not applicable) Any services I provide to the Club are provided as a hobby or pastime.

I do not rely on the above payments (if applicable) for my regular personal income.

I have (if applicable) submitted a 'statement by a supplier' to the Club (available at <https://www.ato.gov.au/forms/statement-by-a-supplier-not-quoting-an-abn/>)

(Note: It is the responsibility of the Player to satisfy themselves that the above acknowledgements are true and correct. Players are encouraged to obtain their own tax advice in respect of the payments they receive in connection with AFL football).

By signing this Declaration, Player and Club confirm they will comply with all applicable rules, regulations and policies including the National Player Transfer Regulations, National Deregistration Policy and applicable State Football Body rules.

SIGNED By the Player: Date: / /

By parent or legal guardian (where Player is under 18 years of age) Date: / /

Appendix 1: Standard Player Declaration

For the Club: Date:/...../.....
Position: President | Secretary | Treasurer | Football Manager (delete inapplicable titles)



AFL VICTORIA

COMMUNITY LEAGUE

AFFILIATE REGULATIONS

FEBRUARY 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Application	1
1.3 VFL Competition	1
1.4 Variation	1
2. Definitions and Interpretations	1
2.1 Definitions	1
2.2 Interpretations	2
3. Player, Club and League Transfer Regulations	2
3.1 Involvement	2
3.2 Disputes	2
3.3 Appeal Process	2
3.4 Conflicting Regulations	3
3.5 Existing Agreements	3
3.6 AFL / VFL Players	3
3.7 Affiliate to Affiliate Regulations	4
3.8 AFL Victoria Independent Panel & Appeals Board Nominations	4
4. Gender Regulations	4
5. AFL Victoria Policies	5
5.1 Required Affiliate Policies	5
5.2 Risk Management – Insurance Requirements	5
5.3 AFL Victoria / VFL Policies	5
5.4 Appeals	5
5.5 Coach Accreditation Appeals	5
6. Financial Reporting Procedure	6
6.1 Annual Report	6
6.2 Financial Year	6
7. Sponsorships	6
7.1 Negotiated Sponsors	6
7.2 Protected Sponsors	6
7.3 Notice	6

8.	Communication Between AFL Victoria and Affiliates	7
8.1	Affiliate Input	7
8.2	Policy Distribution	7
8.3	Affiliate Obligation	7
8.4	Affiliate Contact Details	7
9.	Regulation and Policy Amendments and Additions	7
9.1	Regulation and Policy Review	7
9.2	Affiliate Submissions	7

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Further to the AFL Victoria / Affiliate Agreements, particularly clause 5, AFL Victoria provide these regulations and policies to assist Affiliates in the development of the game. The regulations and policies are to be read in conjunction with the AFL Victoria Membership Agreement particularly preserving the internal autonomy of the Affiliate.

1.2 Application

These Regulations apply to all Affiliates of AFL Victoria and their subsequent affiliated leagues and clubs. Specifically, in relation to player, club or league movements, these Regulations govern the said movement from the jurisdiction of one Affiliate to another Affiliate.

1.3 VFL Competition

It is noted that Regulations in respect of the VFL Competition are detailed in the “VFL Playing Rules and Regulations” and are to be applied to VFL Club Licence Holders.

1.4 Variation

Following Affiliate input and in accordance with the time line as set down in Regulation 9.2, AFL Victoria may, from time to time, alter these Regulations in its absolute discretion.

2. Definitions and Interpretations

2.1 Definitions

Unless the context requires otherwise, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

AFL Victoria	Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited ACN 24 147 664 579
Metropolitan Affiliate	a direct AFL Victoria Affiliate conducting a competition within Metropolitan Melbourne
Metropolitan Affiliates	the collective of all Metropolitan Affiliates
VAFSA	Victorian Amateur Football Association
VCFL	Victorian Country Football League or AFL Victoria Country
Local League	an Affiliate of the VCFL, a Metropolitan Affiliate or the VAFSA
Local Club	an Affiliate Club of a Local League
Under Age Competition	a schedule of underage matches
Under Age Match	a match where participation is limited by the age of players
Open Age Match	a match where participation is not limited by the age of players
Third 18	the oldest under age team where such team is directly linked to an open age team
New Affiliated Body	the league to which a player or club seeks to transfer to
Former Affiliated Body	the league from which a player or club seeks to transfer away From

Days	business days, inclusive of the date of receipt regardless of the actual time received. For the purposes of these Regulations, business days relate to all weekdays (days excluding Saturday and Sunday) and excludes the following official Victorian Public Holidays when they fall on a weekday – New Years Day, Australia Day, Labour Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Queens Birthday, Melbourne Cup Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
AFL Victoria Decision	An AFL Victoria decision or determination for the purposes of these Regulations include a decision or determination of the AFL Victoria Executive Committee which shall comprise the General Manager and at least two other persons appointed by the General Manager.
Female competition	A female competition is a competition in which the majority of the players are female.

2.2 Interpretations

In the interpretation of these Regulations, unless the context requires otherwise:-

- (a) words importing the singular shall be deemed to include the plural and vice versa;
- (b) words importing any gender shall be deemed to include the other gender;
- (c) headings are included for convenience only and shall not affect the interpretation of these Regulations;
- (d) "including" and similar words are not words of limitation;
- (e) any words, terms or phrases defined in the remainder of these Regulations shall have the meaning prescribed within the particular Regulation; and
- (f) words, terms or phrases not otherwise defined in these Regulations, shall be given their ordinary meaning.

3. Player, Club & League Transfer Regulations

3.1 Involvement

AFL Victoria Affiliate League Regulations are applicable for any transfers involving more than one AFL Victoria Affiliate.

3.2 Disputes

AFL Victoria will make determinations in relation to any disputes that arise involving more than one Affiliate and decisions of AFL Victoria shall be binding.

3.3 Appeal Process

Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, relevant appeals will be heard as follows:

Applications for an appeal hearing are to be lodged with AFL Victoria within ten (10) days of notification of a decision by a club, league or Affiliate (refer AFL National Player Transfer Regulations).

De-registration/player transfer appeals will be heard by the AFL Victoria Appeals Board as appointed from time to time pursuant to Regulation 3.8.

All other appeals to AFL Victoria will be heard by the AFL Victoria Appeals Board as appointed from time to time pursuant to Regulation 3.8.

3.4 Conflicting Regulations

No Affiliate shall have in place rules or Regulations that conflict with these Regulations unless such rule or Regulation affects the Affiliate only. In the event of such rules or Regulations being inconsistent, in conflict with or designed to circumvent these AFL Victoria Regulations, then the latter shall bind Affiliates.

3.5 Existing Agreements

Existing agreements in place involving more than one Affiliate (i.e. AFL Victoria Country / Metropolitan Affiliates, Metropolitan Affiliates / VAFA, VAFA / VCFL, Metropolitan Affiliates internal) are replaced by these Regulations and Appendix 1 AFL National Player Transfer System and Appendix 2 Affiliate to Affiliate: Movement of Clubs.

3.6 AFL / VFL Players

The following Regulations relate to the movement of players between the Affiliate and the VFL Open Age and Under Age competitions and the AFL.

3.6.1 AFL Listed Players

For the purposes of these Regulations, the definition of VFL registered players includes those listed players at an AFL club where such club also competes in the VFL competition.

3.6.2 Interchange Form

Players desiring registration with the VFL Open Age or Under Age competitions shall complete the appropriate Interchange Form.

Upon lodgement of the form not yet signed by the player's local club or league, the VFL may grant the applicant a permit to play.

Such form shall then be forwarded to the relevant League for completion and returned to the VFL within 10 days.

3.6.3 Suspended Players

(a) The permit to play will be withdrawn in the event the player is under suspension at the relevant time.

(b) Disqualifications by the VFL or local league tribunal shall be recognised by all parties to this agreement.

3.6.4 Interchange to Local Club

The relevant player retains registration with the local club and, in accordance with the VFL interchange Regulations, the VFL may permit players to return to their interchange club when their VFL Club does not require their services. The VFL or a VFL club may not interchange a player to a club other than the players' interchange club unless the player has first obtained a relevant transfer from his current interchange club.

3.7 Affiliate to Affiliate Regulations

3.7.1 Player Transfer and Appeal Process

Refer AFL National Player Transfer System Regulations for appropriate rules.

3.7.2 Admission of New Clubs / Transfer of Existing Clubs and Appeals Process

Refer Appendix 2 for appropriate rules.

3.7.3 League Transfer process

Refer Appendix 2 for appropriate rules

3.7.4 Interchange Agreements

Interchange agreements involving two Affiliates may be introduced with support from both Affiliates and AFL Victoria.

AFL Victoria will make a determination on a dispute regarding a current interchange agreement following request for such determination from either party.

3.8 AFL Victoria Appeals Board Nominations

Nominations from Affiliates for appointments to either the AFL Victoria Appeals Board are to be received by the AFL Victoria Community Football Development Manager by no later than 1st August in a given year.

AFL Victoria is to determine the appointment of members to the AFL Victoria Appeals Board. The decision of AFL Victoria regarding appointments shall be final.

4. Gender Regulation

AFL Victoria is awaiting the 2019 Gender Regulation Policy. Any enquiries in regards to the gender Regulations by AFL Victoria affiliates for 2019 should come through AFL Victoria.

5. AFL Victoria Policies

5.1 Required Affiliate League Policies

Considering the AFL Victoria objectives as set out in the Affiliate Agreement, each Affiliate must as a minimum adopt procedures and policies to address:

- 5.1.1 Risk Management;
- 5.1.2 AFL Victoria Vilification & Discrimination Policy
- 5.1.3 Health Through Football;
 - 5.1.3 (a) Anti-Doping Policy
 - 5.1.3 (b) Infectious Diseases Policy
 - 5.1.3 (c) Alcohol Management Policy
 - 5.1.3 (d) Smokefree Policy
- 5.1.4 Codes of Conduct;
- 5.1.5 AFL Victoria De-Registration Policy;
- 5.1.6 AFL Victoria Member Protection Policy;
- 5.1.7 AFL National Player Transfer Regulations; and such other football or community issues that require policies and procedures that arise from time to time as notified by AFL Victoria.
- 5.1.8 Fair game respect matters
- 5.1.9 AFL Child Safety Policy

5.2 Risk Management – Insurance Requirements

Such minimum insurance requirements will alter in line with community football requirements and AFL Victoria will notify Affiliates of the requirements at least annually.

5.3 AFL Victoria Policies

AFL Victoria has provided, and will continue to provide, the current AFL Victoria / VFL procedures and policies in writing and / or via the official AFL Victoria website. These procedures and policies are to be used by Affiliates as the minimum requirement when developing the Affiliate's relevant policy. The AFL Victoria / VFL Policy will be the Affiliate Policy should the Affiliate choose not to further update the AFL Victoria / VFL Policy.

5.4 Appeals

On request, AFL Victoria may from time to time convene an AFL Victoria Appeals Board and shall appoint persons to the AFL Victoria Appeals Board. On any occasion when the Appeals Board is required to be convened AFL Victoria shall appoint a Chairman and a further person or persons to hear and determine the matter.

The hearing shall be conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as a proper consideration of the matter permits. Subject thereto and any provision of the AFL Victoria Regulations in relations thereto, the procedure at any hearing shall be within the discretion of the person appointed as Chairman. The decision of the Appeals Board shall be final and binding.

5.4.1 National Age Dispensation Policy Appeals

The relevant Appeal Body for metropolitan leagues is the Leagues Appeal mechanism.

AFL VICTORIA AFFILIATE LEAGUE REGULATIONS

5.5 Coach Accreditation Appeals

An applicant for coaching accreditation can appeal to AFL Victoria against a decision of the Coaching Development Manager refusing entry into an accreditation course or refusing accreditation once the applicant has completed such course.

6. Financial Reporting Procedure

6.1 Annual Report

Within 7 days of the Annual General Meeting of the Affiliate, the Affiliates Annual Report (including audited and detailed Financial Statements) shall be provided to AFL Victoria.

6.2 Financial Year

Unless otherwise approved, the financial year of AFL Victoria and all Affiliates shall be November 1st to October 31st.

7. Sponsorship

7.1 Sponsors

Where AFL Victoria has entered into a sponsorship arrangement on behalf of its Affiliates, the Affiliate shall support those sponsors in accordance with the contractual arrangements.

7.2 Protected Sponsors

From time to time AFL Victoria will nominate sponsors deemed to be „protected sponsors“ notwithstanding they may not be involved with Affiliates.

The Affiliate acknowledges and agrees that:

- (a) the AFL Victoria Protected Sponsors provide in part the financial resources to AFL Victoria to enable it to financially support the development of Australian Football; and
- (b) in order to maximise the financial benefits for AFL Victoria from such sponsorship, it will only enter into its own sponsorship arrangements with a person or business whose goods, services or operations compete with the goods or services supplied by or the operations of the AFL Victoria Protected Sponsors if it has first advised AFL Victoria of its intention to enter into such arrangement. AFL Victoria will provide advice to the Affiliate regarding implications of entering into such arrangement.

Protected sponsors will only be nominated after AFL Victoria makes every endeavour to ensure that such protected sponsors will not conflict with Affiliate arrangements.

7.3 Notice

AFL Victoria will give reasonable notice to Affiliates of protected and other sponsors

8. Communication Between AFL Victoria and Affiliates

8.1 Affiliate Input

Prior to formulating any AFL Victoria policy input will be sought from Affiliates.

8.2 Policy Distribution

AFL Victoria will provide copies of all relevant policies affecting the Affiliate and will seek to promote these policies as widely as possible (e.g. newsletter, internet).

8.3 Affiliate Obligation

It is the obligation of the Affiliate to distribute AFL Victoria policies & newsletters to its Affiliates.

8.4 Affiliate Contact Details

Each Affiliate must provide to AFL Victoria appropriate identity & contact details of its President and CEO/General Manager and changes must be notified to AFL Victoria within 10 days of such changes taking place from time to time.

9. Regulation & Policy Amendments and Additions

9.1 Regulation and Policy Review

AFL Victoria will from time to time review its policies and Regulations and will provide Affiliates with appropriate consultation and an opportunity to provide input into any updates of AFL Victoria rules, Regulations and policies.

9.2 Affiliate Submissions

Affiliates may make submissions to AFL Victoria in respect to current and / or potential future rules, Regulations and policies.

Written submissions for AFL Victoria consideration are to be forwarded to the General Manager of AFL Victoria by no later than 1st August in each year. AFL Victoria decisions regarding the submission are to be made by no later than 1st October in the same year following Affiliate input and review.



APPENDIX 2

MEMBER TO MEMBER

- Movement of Clubs or Teams

Amended: December 2017

INDEX

1. Admission of New Clubs / Transfer of Existing Clubs or Teams	3
(1.1) General	3
(1.2) New Clubs	3
(1.3) Transfer of Existing or Amalgamated Clubs	3
(1.4) Transfer of Teams	4
(1.5) Establishment of New Teams within a League other than The League where all teams of the club are currently affiliated.	4
2. Appeals of Clubs	4

MEMBER TO MEMBER - MOVEMENT OF CLUBS OR TEAMS

1. ADMISSION OF NEW CLUBS / TRANSFER OF EXISTING CLUBS OR TEAMS

1.1 General

- a) For the purposes of these regulations, a decision of the Board means a decision of the AFL Victoria Appeals Board as constituted under the rules, or a decision of the AFL Victoria Appeals Board.
- b) Subject to Regulation 2 below, the decision of AFL Victoria shall be final and binding on all Affiliates.
- c) AFL Victoria shall make such determinations and decisions in respect to Affiliates or Affiliated Bodies failing to comply with these regulations as it deems fit.

1.2 New Clubs

- a) Affiliates intending to accept a new club must notify AFL Victoria of its intention to accept the new club in writing by December 1st.
- b) In exceptional circumstances, the AFL Victoria General Manager may waive the new club deadline of December 1st at his discretion.
- c) Notwithstanding Regulation 1.2(a) above, Affiliates intending to admit a newly formed club shall notify AFL Victoria in writing of its intention to admit such newly formed club no later than ten (10) business days after the league agrees to admit such club. The newly formed club may not participate in any league match until after AFL Victoria approval has been granted.
- d) AFL Victoria will make a decision in relation to the requested approval of the newly formed club as soon as practical after requesting advice from the Affiliate.
- e) If AFL Victoria directs the Affiliate not to admit or accept the newly formed club, then the Affiliate can appeal against such direction to the AFL Victoria Appeals Board under Regulation 2, below. The newly formed club cannot appeal the decision of AFL Victoria.

1.3 Transfer of Existing or Amalgamated Clubs

- a) Affiliates intending to accept the transfer of existing or amalgamated clubs from one Affiliate to another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria and the former Affiliated Body of its intention to accept such transfer in writing by October 15th.

- b) An Affiliate seeking to appeal against a decision of the new Affiliated Body to seek to accept such transfer is to provide written notification to AFL Victoria and the new Affiliated Body within ten (10) business days of receiving advice from AFL Victoria of such intended transfer.
- c) AFL Victoria will make a decision in relation to the transfer of such existing or amalgamated club as soon as practical after requesting submissions from each party.
- d) Where a club or clubs seek to transfer from one Affiliate to another Affiliate, such transfer must be approved by AFL Victoria. In making such determination or decision AFL Victoria will take into account, without limitation, the geographic nature of Leagues, League viability, community development and future growth of the Leagues concerned.
- e) Clubs and Affiliates affected or potentially affected by such determination or decision by AFL Victoria shall have the right to a hearing before the AFL Victoria Appeals Board whose decision on the proposed application shall be final.
- f) The procedure applicable to such hearing will be determined by the AFL Victoria Appeals Board and notified to those parties wishing to be heard.

1.4 Transfer of Teams

- (a) Any League proposing to accept the transfer of a team or teams from one affiliate to another affiliate must advise the teams current affiliated League and AFL Victoria during the period commencing 1st August and ending 31st October.
- (b) If the current affiliated body disputes the proposed transfer within 10 days of being notified by AFL Victoria, both affiliated bodies will be provided with the procedure for resolving the dispute and AFL Victoria will make a decision in relation to the proposed transfer as soon as practicable.
- (c) In exceptional circumstances, the AFL Victoria General Manager may waive the team transfer deadline of October 31st at his discretion.

1.5 Establishment of New Teams within a League other than the League where all teams of the club are currently affiliated.

Any League proposing to accept a newly established team or teams from a Club, except where all teams of the club are currently affiliated in the one League, must advise AFL Victoria and the other League where teams are affiliated, by March 31st. If the other League disputes the proposed establishment of the new team or teams it must notify AFL Victoria within 10 days of receiving notification and AFL Victoria will make a decision in relation to the objection as soon as practicable

2. Appeals of Clubs

- a) For the purposes of this Regulation, the AFL Victoria Appeals Board shall be validly constituted by three (3) Members.

- b) The AFL Victoria Chairman has the authority to appoint 3 Members of the AFL Victoria Appeals Board and one member must be legally trained.
- c) A member of the AFL Victoria Appeals Board must not be an Executive Officer of the Affiliated Bodies concerned in the appeal or other Affiliates as determined by the Chairman of AFL Victoria. The Chairman of AFL Victoria may delegate his responsibilities to AFL Victoria General Manager as he/she sees fit.
- d) An appeal must be lodged in writing ("the notice of appeal") with AFL Victoria within ten (10) days of the affiliated body receiving written notification from AFL Victoria of the decision. A copy of the Transfer Application shall accompany the notice of appeal (if applicable). An appeal shall be heard by the AFL Victoria Appeals Board within 15 days of receipt of notice of appeal by AFL Victoria or such other period as the Appeals Board determine.
- e) Prior to the hearing of the appeal, each party shall, within the time specified by the AFL Victoria Appeals Board, lodge with AFL Victoria written submissions which may contain:
 - f) Any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the Transfer Application and the appeal; and
 - g) Any other matters that they desire to be taken into account by the AFL Victoria Appeals Board in determining the appeal.
 - h) AFL Victoria shall as soon as practicable, but prior to the hearing of the appeal, distribute the written submissions to the other parties concerned in the appeal.
 - i) At the hearing of an appeal, each party may be represented by an advocate provided that such advocate is not be a person who is legally qualified, unless approved by the Chairman of the Appeals Board.
 - j) The hearing before the AFL Victoria Appeals Board shall be:-
 - k) Inquisitorial in nature; and
 - l) Conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as a proper consideration of the matters before it permits.
 - m) The AFL Victoria Appeals Board:
 - n) Shall provide each party an opportunity to be heard;
 - o) Shall hear and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner:
 - p) Is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record, but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit.
 - q) May regulate the proceedings before it in such manner as it thinks fit;
 - r) May confirm, reverse or modify the decision of AFL Victoria and make such decisions in such manner as it thinks fit; and
 - s) Shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision.

- t) Upon request from the club and / or affiliates involved and subject to seven days notice to be provided to AFL Victoria, AFL Victoria will ensure that its Chairman of such appeal shall be legally qualified.
- u) An existing or amalgamated club may only lodge one appeal in each year to AFL Victoria.

AFL (NSW-ACT) / AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY AGREEMENT

Whereas it is in the mutual interest of AFL Victoria Country and AFL (NSW/ACT) to co-operate in the interests of the Australian National Game of Football and to assist each other by all reasonable means in their power, AFL Victoria Country and AFL (NSW/ACT) agree to observe the under-mentioned conditions covering the transfer of Clubs between their two organisations:

(a) A Club shall not be permitted to transfer from AFL Victoria Country to AFL (NSW/ACT), or vice versa without consent of its Controlling Body and an affiliated body shall not be permitted to transfer from AFL Victoria Country to AFL (NSW/ACT), or vice-versa without consent of AFL Victoria Country or AFL (NSW/ACT), as the case maybe, unless the affiliated body is affected by the AFF Article 44. When applications to transfer are refused, appeals against such decisions shall be dealt with by the Appeals and Disputes Board.

(b) (i) Appeals and Disputes Board consisting of five persons, two persons appointed by each of AFL Victoria Country and AFL (NSW/ACT), together with an independent Chairman shall deal with any appeal or dispute arising from this agreement other than those appeals referred in (i) above and shall meet within 14 days of notification being received from either party to this agreement that Meeting of the Board is desired. The appelland party shall be required to satisfy the Appeals and Disputes Board that grounds for an appeal exist and shall also be required to lodge with each appeal a deposit of \$300, such deposit to be forfeited if in the opinion of the Board the appeal is considered frivolous and in such cases the money so forfeited shall be utilised for defraying expenses incurred in connection with meetings of the Board. Procedures to be used for the conduct of the appeal will be those of the Controlling Body (AFL Victoria Country or AFL NSW/ ACT) where the transfer was initiated. Notwithstanding the appointment of two members of the Board from each of AFL Victoria Country and AFL (NSW/ ACT), each such body may nominate a representative to appear before the Board in the matter of any appeal or dispute.

(ii) Clearance applications by clubs close on 31st October in each year.

(iii) Applications of appeal to the Appeals and Disputes Board close on the 30th November in each year.

(c) AFL Victoria Country and NSWAFI affiliates may enter into Area Agreements. Area Agreements between AFL Victoria Country and NSWAFI affiliates shall operate under the following guidelines:—
An Area Agreement between the

Football League and the

Football League.

This agreement is signed pursuant to the clearance regulations contained in AFL Victoria Country and AFL NSW/ACT transfer agreement whereby an interchange of players between clubs of the above-mentioned leagues may take place without clearance or permit and is subject to any provisions contained within this agreement:

PROVIDED HOWEVER:

- (i) That this agreement is in force for the season only.
- (ii) That the players involved desire to play with the club in the other league on the day in question.
- (iii) That the clubs involved are agreeable to the players playing on the day in question.

- (iv) A player reported whilst playing in a league on permit in accordance with this agreement shall have the charge heard by the league in which he was playing when reported which, in the event of finding the player guilty, shall determine the penalty.
 - (v) That prior to each match played the player shall obtain written permission to do so from his parent club. The permit shall be entered into the Footyweb system.
 - (vi) With the exception of players of junior age competitions, players of any club having a bye will not be allowed to play with another club on that day unless he has previously played with that club in the current season under this agreement. The club playing the player from the other league shall show his registered club on the match team sheet. Players of third eighteen teams of senior grade competitions are not to be classified as players of junior age competitions.
- (d) This agreement shall be regarded as a continuing agreement, with either party – i.e. AFL Victoria Country or AFL (NSW/ACT) – having equal rights to terminate by six months notice.

AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY PLAYER TRANSFER AGREEMENT WITH THE VICTORIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOR MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS BETWEEN AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY AND THE AFL, VFL AND NAB LEAGUE COMPETITIONS.

1. VFL OPERATIONS

(i) (a) An AFL Victoria Country player desiring registration with the VFL Competition shall complete and lodge with the VFL a VFL Interchange Form. Upon lodgement of the completed VFL Interchange Form the VFL may grant the applicant a permit to play. If the interchange form is not returned to the VFL within 7 days of receipt by the players AFL Victoria Country League the VFL may grant the player a permit.

(b) An AFL Victoria Country player desiring registration with the NAB League Competition shall complete and lodge with the VFL a NAB League Interchange Form. Upon lodgement of the VFL Interchange Form the VFL may grant the applicant a permit to play. The form shall then be forwarded to the Secretary of AFL Victoria Country League concerned and the players club and returned to the VFL within 14 days. The permit to play would be withdrawn in the event that the player was under disqualification for a misdemeanour or financial reasons.

An AFL Victoria Country player desiring registration with the NAB League/VFL competition between the 1st July (closing date for AFL Victoria Country player clearance applications) and 1st August (closing date for VFL Player registrations) shall be granted a permit to play only on the production of a letter from the players AFL Victoria Country club indicating that the club has no objection to the transfer. A completed VFL interchange form is to accompany such club permission.

(ii) An AFL Victoria Country player who is granted a permit to play in the VFL or NAB League competition shall retain registration with his AFL Victoria Country Club and shall be eligible to play with his AFL Victoria Country Club when his services are not required by his VFL or NAB League Club. An AFL Victoria Country player playing in the VFL Senior competition shall require the written approval of the VFL Club to play with his AFL Victoria Country club and shall be subject to the rules of the VFL competition. A list of Senior VFL players available to play with AFL Victoria Country club with which they are registered shall be posted on the VFL website on Friday afternoon on the Friday prior to the weekend round of matches.

Where AFL Victoria Country registered players, who are also VFL listed, are not released by their VFL club, and as such play without permission, will be considered ineligible players under AFL Victoria Country rules and dealt with accordingly by AFL Victoria Country League, Area Appeals Committee or Appeals Board under the rules and regulations of AFL Victoria Country.

An AFL Victoria Country player who is granted a permit to play in the VFL Senior competition shall only transfer between VFL clubs after giving written advice to his AFL Victoria Country club of the impending transfer 48 hours before the transfer is to take effect via the lodgement of an interchange form with AFL Victoria Country Operations Manager.

Any AFL Victoria Country Player, who has played in the NAB League /VFL/AFL competition on any weekend round of matches, is not eligible to play with their AFL Victoria Country club on the same weekend round of matches, excepting where the NAB League /VFL senior team player has played less than twenty five minutes of actual playing time and has been granted a medical clearance from the NAB League/VFL club he may return to play with his AFL Victoria Country club on the same weekend.

(iii) A player may interchange between the NAB League/VFL and AFL Victoria Country at any time throughout the year subject to the player satisfying his AFL Victoria Country Leagues requirements for eligibility for finals matches.

(iv) Disqualifications by Independent Tribunals or decisions of Leagues and Clubs for disciplinary reasons against any player and endorsed by the NAB League /VFL or AFL Victoria Country as the case may be shall be recognised by all parties to this Agreement.

AFL OPERATIONS

(v) A drafted player shall transfer from a AFL Victoria Country Club to an AFL Club on the Australian Football League Interchange Form 4.

The form is to be returned to the AFL within fourteen (14) days of dispatch from the AFL.

Should the form not be returned within the specified fourteen (14) days the AFL may grant the applicant permission to play.

The AFL shall notify AFL Victoria Country Club from which a player has been interchanged and granted a permit to play in the AFL by way of ensuring a cover slip is dispatched to the club concerned in the week following the granting of such permit.

Upon registration with the AFL the player shall retain registration with his original club and may interchange with such club at his AFL Clubs discretion. Such agreement shall also apply to any subsequent transfer to other AFL Clubs. Should his AFL Club be resident in another State, he may interchange with a club in that State provided that he will require a Form 1 Transfer from his original club, should he be delisted by the AFL within 36 months from date of registration with the AFL club.

A Player delisted by an AFL Club shall be required to obtain a transfer, as outlined in the National Player Transfer Regulations, before being eligible to play, or continue to play, with another club, other than a transfer to an AFL Club.

An AFL Victoria Country player must meet his local League domestic requirements for eligibility for finals matches.

In the event of a player wishing to transfer to any club in any competition other than his AFL or AFL Victoria Country Clubs, he shall be required to complete all relevant transfer procedures from his AFL and AFL Victoria Country Club in accordance with AFL and AFL Victoria Country transfer regulations respectively.

(vi) Transfer fees for players from AFL Victoria Country affiliated clubs to transfer to the AFL shall be paid in accordance with the schedule of transfer fees specified in the AFL/VFL Agreement. For the purpose of AFL/VFL transfer fee allocation, a player on interchange to the VFL or NAB League competition will be deemed to have played with AFL Victoria Country Club to which he remains registered.

GENERAL

(vii) A Committee comprising two representatives each of the VFL and AFL Victoria Country shall deal with any dispute arising from interchange of players under the provisions of this Agreement and any interpretation or variation of any Clause arising from this agreement, and its decisions shall be final and binding.

(viii) This Agreement shall be regarded as a continuing Agreement with each party (VFL or AFL Victoria Country) having equal rights to terminate by six months notice and may be varied by decision of the Committee as authorised in the terms of Clause (vi) hereof.

NATIONAL PLAYER & OFFICIAL
DEREGISTRATION POLICY



February 2020



NATIONAL PLAYER & OFFICIAL DEREGISTRATION POLICY – TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background	3
1.2	Definitions	3
1.3	Application	4
1.4	Variation	4
2.	POLICY AIMS	4
3.	DEREGISTRATION PROCEDURES	4
3.1	General	4
3.2	Deregistration Process	5
3.3	Application for Re-registration	7

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This National Player and Official Deregistration policy (**Policy**) has been developed to provide a risk management framework and policy basis for community football administrators to recognise a duty of care with respect to Players and Officials who could pose an unacceptable risk to other Players and Officials.

It is imperative that all Leagues and State Bodies adopt this Policy to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to the Deregistration of Players and Officials.

1.2 Definitions

AFL Competition (or **AFL Competitions**) means one or both of the elite national men's or women's competitions (as the context dictates).

Club means an Australian football club fielding a team within a Competition conducted by a Football Body.

Competition means an Australian football competition (including AFL 9s and Masters competitions) conducted or administered by a Football Body, League or Football Body affiliate (e.g. Region Commission).

Deregistration means the withdrawal of a Player's permit to play or an Official's capacity to officiate in any Competition.

Football Body means a football body conducting a Competition, including the State Bodies, Leagues, and other unaffiliated football bodies, as the context dictates.

League means an Australian football league or a Football Body who conducts or administers a Competition.

Official means without limitation coach, assistant coach, officer, trainer, water carrier, team manager, interchange steward, umpire, umpire escort, time keeper, scoreboard attendant, runner, employee or any other match official or person performing any duties (paid or unpaid) for or on behalf of a Club, League or Football Body at any Australian Football match.

Player means a player who participates in any Australian football match of a Competition.

Reportable Offence means any reportable offence identified in the Laws of Australian Football, as amended from time to time.

State Body means the governing State and Territory Australian football bodies affiliated to the AFL as follows:

- (a) AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Limited (ACN 086 839 385);
- (b) AFL QLD Limited (ABN 66 090 629 342);
- (c) AFL Northern Territory Limited (ACN 134 092 854);
- (d) Football Tasmania Limited (ACN 085 213 350);
- (e) Australian Football League (Victoria) (ACN 147 664 579);

- (f) South Australian National Football League Inc (ABN 59 518 757 737); and
- (g) West Australian Football Commission Inc (51 167 923 136).

Suspension means a period during which a Player or Official is not allowed to play or officiate in a match of Australian football incurred as a result of a Reportable Offence or Reportable Offences.

And other capitalised terms used in this Policy have the meaning given to them in the National Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.

1.3 Application

- (a) This Policy applies to all Football Bodies and their affiliated Leagues and Clubs and all Players and Officials.
- (b) Headings and indexes are only included for ease of reference and do not affect interpretation.

1.4 Variation

The AFL may from time to time, and in consultation with State Bodies where necessary, alter the procedures for Deregistration in its absolute discretion.

2. POLICY AIMS

The Policy aims to:

- (a) deregister a Player who is found guilty of a Reportable Offence(s) where such offence or offences cause the Suspension history of such Player to fall beyond an acceptable level for Australian football;
- (b) deregister an Official who is found guilty of a Reportable Offence(s) where such offence or offences are deemed to fall beyond an acceptable level for Australian football;
- (c) apply the Deregistration of a Player/Official to both roles so that a deregistered Player cannot officiate in any capacity and a deregistered Official cannot participate as a Player in any Competition;
- (d) prevent a Player from transferring between Leagues with the view to creating a “clean slate” with the new League. The Suspension history shall follow the Player to allow the new League to make an informed judgement regarding registration taking into account past and current Suspensions.

3. DEREGISTRATION PROCEDURES

3.1 General

- (a) The complete on-field and off-field disciplinary history of a Player is to be forwarded to the new League from the previous League upon a Player being cleared from one League to another (as per the National Player Registration & Transfer Regulations, as amended from time to time). For the avoidance of doubt, **all sanctions** determined by a League or State Body (as a result of a tribunal, investigation, appeal or similar process) shall be forwarded to the new League for their records together with the clearance / transfer details, however **only Suspensions** imposed as a result of Reportable Offences under the Laws of Australian Football are relevant to Deregistration pursuant to this Policy.
- (b) The full Suspension history of a Player (including tribunal record at all previous League/s) shall be considered when determining penalties for Reportable Offences in the assessment of a Suspension. However, in determining a Suspension, the appointed tribunal body or nominated

decision maker should not have regard to the effect of the Suspension on Deregistration. In other words, each Reportable Offence should be determined on its merits.

- (c) A League that suspects that an Official may have a Suspension history is to seek information from the Official's previous League/s.
- (d) Club imposed penalties will not be considered on the permanent record for a Player or Official.
- (e) Information regarding suspended sentences will be transferred between Leagues and Leagues will only consider such sentences relevant to calculating the combined Suspension for Deregistration if and when the Suspension from such suspended sentence is served.
- (f) For the avoidance of doubt and unless otherwise agreed by the relevant State Body:
 - i) if a Player is deregistered pursuant to this Policy, that Player will also be prohibited from acting as an Official in relation to a Competition; and
 - ii) if an Official is deregistered pursuant to this Policy, that Official will also be prohibited from participating as a Player in any Competition.

3.2 Deregistration Process

3.2.1 Notification

(a) Leagues

- i) Leagues must advise all Clubs of the details of the Policy and make the Policy readily available to their Clubs, Players and Officials.
- ii) All Players, upon registering to play for a Club, do so on the basis that their previous Suspensions count towards their Suspension history for the purposes of this Policy regardless of when they may have been incurred.
- iii) Subject to 3.2.1(a)(iv), once a Player/Official has accumulated a Suspension history of ten (10) matches or more, the League must advise the Player/Official and their Club in writing that the Player/Official faces the risk of Deregistration should the Player/Official incur further Suspension(s) that results in him/her reaching or exceeding the sixteen (16) match total Suspension history (**Suspension Notice**).
- iv) Subject to 3.2.2(d), a Player/Official will be automatically Deregistered in accordance with section 3.2.2 if Player/Official has served sixteen (16) matches (or more) total Suspension. In circumstances where before commencing the current Suspension the Player/Official had not already accumulated ten (10) matches (or more) Suspension history, Player/Official does not need to receive a Suspension Notice under section 3.2.1(a)(iii).
- v) Notification of Deregistration shall be made in writing to the Player/Official and their Club.
- vi) State Bodies shall be notified in writing of all decisions to deregister a Player/Official, by the Player's/Official's Club or League. A central database of all deregistered Players/Officials will be maintained by the AFL and all State Bodies via Footyweb.
- vii) Should a Player/Official's Suspension history already have reached or exceeded a combined total of sixteen (16) matches Suspension at the time of implementing this Policy, the League is to formally advise the Player/Official and the Player's/Official's

club that the Player/Official faces Deregistration should the Player/Official incur another Suspension.

(b) Clubs

- i) Clubs must advise all of their Players/Officials in relation to this Policy.
- ii) Clubs must at all times strive to ensure their Players and Officials do not get themselves into a position of potentially being deregistered. Anger management training is seen as a critical component of this prevention for Clubs to arrange and implement.
- iii) Clubs must use all best endeavours to inform their Player/Official of any notification provided by the League pursuant to section 3.2.1(a) and must promptly confirm and acknowledge to the League the steps taken by the Club to ensure that the Player/Official has received the notification.

(c) Commencement of Deregistration

- i) For the avoidance of doubt, Deregistration will commence on the date on which the most recent Suspension of the Player/Official (being the Suspension which resulted in that Player/Official reaching or exceeding the total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension) ends.
- ii) For clarity, the Player/Official will be deregistered in Footyweb (as distinct from Deregistration as defined in this Policy) at the time that the Player/Official receives a sanction which results in that Player/Official meeting the criteria for deregistration outlined in section 3.2.2.

3.2.2 Criteria for Deregistration

(a) Players

- i) Players shall be automatically deregistered and not allowed further registration with the same or another Club or League (except in accordance with section 3.3) if the Player has **served a combined total of sixteen (16) matches Suspension (or greater) as a Player or Official** (including as a Player during the Player's AFL Competition career, subject to section 3.2.2(c) below) as a result of Reportable Offences only. For the avoidance of doubt, a Player who is deregistered will also not be allowed to act as an Official in the same or another League or in any Competition.
- ii) For the avoidance of doubt:
 - a. the sixteen (16) matches served Suspension must relate to Suspensions imposed as a result of Reportable Offences under the Laws of Australian Football; and
 - b. match ineligibility or sanctions received by a Player in relation to breaches of the AFL Anti-Doping Code (as amended from time to time), a code of conduct or any other regulation or policy which are not as a result of Reportable Offences under the Laws of Australian Football will not be counted in determining accumulated Suspensions under this Policy; and
 - c. only Suspension periods relating to Reportable Offences committed by a Player after attaining the age of 16 years will count for the purposes of this Policy.

(b) Officials

Officials shall be deregistered and not allowed to officiate or play in any form in the same or another League or Competition if they have served a combined total of sixteen (16) matches Suspension (or greater) as a Player or Official throughout their whole Australian football career (i.e. not limited to age of the Official at the time of a Suspension).

(c) AFL Competition Career

i) Any Suspension period served by a Player during their AFL Competition career shall carry over to non-AFL Competitions. However, any such Suspension period shall be reduced by 25% for the purposes of this Policy (to the decimal point). For example, if a Player receives a total Suspension of six (6) matches whilst playing in the AFL Competition, only four and one half (4.5) matches shall carry over for the purposes of this Policy. For the avoidance of doubt, the 25% discount does not apply where an AFL Competition Player receives a Suspension for an incident while playing outside of the AFL Competition.

ii) If:

a. a Player who has ceased being a registered Player in the AFL Competition would have been deemed to have served a combined total of less than sixteen (16) matches Suspension based on the old 50% discount afforded to AFL Players in section 3.2.2(c)(i) of this Policy; and

b. due to the change in the applicable discount from 50% to 25% applicable from the 2018 season that Player, as a result of the change, is now deemed to have served a combined total of more than sixteen (16) matches Suspension,

then that Player will, from the commencement of the 2018 season, be deemed to have carried over a total Suspension period of fifteen (15) matches from their AFL Competition career provided that:

c. the Player commenced playing in a non-AFL Competition before or in the 2017 season; and

d. has continued to play in a non-AFL Competition each season thereafter.

(d) First Offence

Should a Player or Official receive sixteen (16) matches or more Suspension as a "first offence" it shall be at the State Body's discretion (in consultation with the relevant League) as to whether or not that Player/Official will be deregistered following his/her Suspension.

3.3 Application for Re-registration

(a) Subject to 3.3(e), a Player/Official who has been deregistered in accordance with section 3.2 may (subject to section 3.3(f)) apply for re-registration not less than 12 calendar months after the date on which their Deregistration commenced (such date being determined in accordance with section 3.2.1(c)(i)).

(b) Subject to sections 3.3(a) and 3.3(f), a deregistered Player/Official can apply for re-registration by making a written application to the relevant State Body in accordance with section 3.3(c) (**Re-Registration Hearing**).

(c) Subject to the following requirements, the State Body to which the League where the de-registered Player/Official is applying for re-registration is affiliated will hear the Re-Registration

Hearing in accordance with the State Body's rules, regulations, by-laws and/or guidelines regulating tribunal and appeals procedures:

- i) A Re-Registration Hearing will be heard at a time and place to be determined by the State Body;
 - ii) A panel comprising three (3) independent panel members (including one chairperson) will preside over the Re-Registration Hearing;
 - iii) The Player/Official, former and proposed Club(s), relevant League(s) and State Body(s) have the right to make submissions to the Re-Registration Hearing panel;
 - iv) The Re-Registration Hearing panel must not approve a Player's re-registration unless the panel is reasonably satisfied that:
 - 1. the Player or Official is genuinely rehabilitated or committed to ongoing rehabilitation; and
 - 2. the Player or Official is unlikely to re-offend; and
 - 3. the Player or Official does not pose an unacceptable risk to other Players/Officials; and
 - 4. any other exceptional circumstances as determined by the panel in its absolute discretion;
 - v) The Re-Registration Hearing panel cannot allow conditional re-registration (for example re-registration as a particular kind of Official).
- (d) The Re-Registration Hearing panel may regulate the proceedings before it as it deems fit and, to the extent permitted by law, the decision of the panel shall be final and binding on all parties.
- (e) A Player or Official may only submit one (1) Re-Registration Hearing application to the applicable State Body in accordance with section 3.3(c) in any one Australian football year.
- (f) If an applicable State Body considers that exceptional circumstances exist which may reasonably justify them to hear an application for re-registration of a particular Player or Official before the end of the 12-month deregistration period the applicable State Body may waive a portion of the 12-month deregistration period and conduct a Re-Registration Hearing for that particular Player or Official prior to the end of the 12-month deregistration period subject to obtaining the approval of the AFL General Counsel (such approval to be provided in that person's absolute discretion and not subject to appeal).
- (g) For the avoidance of doubt:
- i) the Re-Registration Hearing under this section 3.3 is an application for re-registration only and is not a review or appeal of previous suspensions. Any disputes relating to a Player/Official's previous suspensions must be dealt with in accordance with the rules, regulations, by-laws and/or guidelines regulating tribunal and appeals procedures of the State Body where the suspensions were imposed;
 - ii) because deregistration occurs automatically (as set out in section 3.2.2), there is no review or appeal process for deregistration under this policy. The appropriate appeal avenue for a Player/Official who has been automatically deregistered is as set out in section 3.3(g)(i);

- iii) a deregistered Player or Official cannot participate in a Competition as a Player or as an Official unless he/she is re-registered following a successful Re-Registration Hearing in accordance with this section 3.3;
- iv) if a Player or Official is re-registered in accordance with this section 3.3, and subsequently receives a Suspension as a result of a Reportable Offence, that Player or Official will be permanently deregistered and forever prohibited from participating in any Competition as a Player or Official with no further right of appeal or right to apply for re-registration; and
- v) If a Player/Official is de-registered in accordance with this Policy then the Player/Official is de-registered from all AFL-or Football Body-sanctioned Competitions.



AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy

AFL VICTORIA PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM (PPS) POLICY

1. Objective of the Community Club Sustainability Program and PPS Policy

The Community Club Sustainability Program (CCSP) subcommittee believes that equalisation of community football competitions is vital for community football.

Even and fair competitions lead to interest, which leads to bigger crowds, which leads to stronger clubs and competitions. Even competitions allow supporters and club volunteers the chance to turn up on any given match day with the knowledge that the outcome of the game is uncertain and that their team is a chance of winning. This mindset motivates people to become and remain engaged with their community club and provides rewards and recognition to all those that assist in putting a team out on the field.

The philosophy of competition equalisation is accepted in sports all around the world. Professional sporting bodies have accepted practices such as drafts, salary caps, and the like in order to help competitions ensure competitiveness and club sustainability.

The objectives of the state PPS Policy are as follows, to:

1. support equalization of community football Competitions;
2. ensure teams fielded in the Competitions are strong and as equally matched as possible;
3. provide the best opportunities for players to develop and display their skills;
4. provide opportunities to compete at a community level within an orderly and fair system;
5. enable team spirit and public support;
6. encourage community and corporate sponsorships of Community Clubs;
7. reduce the inflationary nature of player payments to assist clubs survive financially and reduce financial burden/stress on Clubs;
8. promote player loyalty and junior development;
9. support the role volunteers undertake in managing their Clubs by:
 - minimising the need to fundraise for player payments
 - providing a more competitive environment on field, that encourages more volunteers to support at Club level
 - providing incentive to spend more time and effort in the development of football, a welcoming Club environment and growing the game within the local community.

This PPS Policy sets out a framework of rules and guiding principles in relation to a player points system which should be adopted by Community Clubs in order to achieve the above objectives.

If this policy is adopted by Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions, they will need to amend their relevant by laws to include all relevant provisions under this PPS Policy.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **AFL** – Australian Football League.
- 2.2. **AFL Victoria** - means Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited ACN 147 664 579.
- 2.3. **CCSP subcommittee** – means the subcommittee made up of current player payments working party members. The members of the party include Region Commission Chairmen, AFL Victoria Staff Representatives, AFL Victoria Country Representatives and Metropolitan League C.E.O's and General Managers.
- 2.4. **Category** – means the player points category which determines the base allocation of the Player Points Allocation for a player.
- 2.5. **Community Club or 'Club'** – means an Australian football club which participates within a community football competition that does not include State Leagues (i.e. the VFL or NAB League).

- 2.6. Competition** – means an Australian football competition in which the Community Clubs participate in official fixtured matches.
- 2.7. Competitive Football** – means any formally organised football competition conducted by a Metropolitan League or Region Commission excluding AFL 9s, school football and women’s competitions.
- 2.8. First Home and Away Match** –means the first official competition match for the home and away season of a Competition.
- 2.9. Footyweb System** – means the online competition management system implemented by football competitions across Victoria.
- 2.10. Metropolitan League** - means the bodies affiliated to AFL Victoria to administer Australian Football in the metropolitan region of Victoria.
- 2.11. National Player Transfer Regulations** – means the AFL’s national policy for player transfers as updated by the AFL from time to time.
- 2.12. NEAFL** – means North East Australia Football League.
- 2.13. Player membership details** – means a player’s individual details provided for on the Footyweb System.
- 2.14. Player Points Allocation** – means the total number of points allocated to an individual player in a Senior Team taking into consideration the Player Points Category that applies to each player and any additional points or deducted points in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 2.15. PPS Policy** - means this community club sustainably player point’s policy as amended by AFL Victoria from time to time.
- 2.16. Premier Competition** - means the Competitions outlined in clause 6.3 of this PPS Policy.
- 2.17. Region Commission** – means the bodies affiliated to AFL Victoria to administer Australian Football in the relevant region of Victoria.
- 2.18. Reserves Competition**–means the Reserves, Club XVIII, Thirds and Veterans competitions within any league or division of a competition.
- 2.19. SANFL** – means the South Australian National Football League.
- 2.20. Season** – means Community Football season between 1 April and 30 September each year (or such other agreed dates).
- 2.21. Season of Service** – means a Season where a player has played a minimum of five (5) senior or reserves games in one Season for a particular Community Club. A player who has completed a Season of Service is eligible for a reduction of one point should they play for the same Community Club in the following season(s) in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 2.22. Senior Competition** – means the senior or 1st grade Competition within any league or division of a Competition.
- 2.23. Senior Team** – means the team of players that participate within a Community Club’s senior or 1st grade football team.
- 2.24. TSL** – means the Tasmanian State League.
- 2.25. Total Team Points** – means the total amount of points allocated to a specific Senior Team by the Metropolitan League or Region Commission for each Season in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 2.26. VFL** – means the Victorian Football League.
- 2.27. WAFL** – means the Western Australia Football League.

Interpretation:

A reference to:

“Aligned Junior Club” is where seniors and juniors exist under the same constitution, or where there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place between standalone senior and junior clubs that is approved by a Metropolitan League or Region Commission. To be considered an ‘Aligned Junior Club’ an MoU must be approved by the relevant Metropolitan League(s) and/or Region Commission(s) to ensure appropriate player pathways exist using the document detailed at Attachment 12.4 of this policy.

“Transferred” refers to the formal transfer authorised under the National Player Transfer Regulations.

“Unique local conditions” refers to the conditions, environment or circumstances which are unique to a Community Club or a region of Community Clubs which may give grounds for a reassessment of a Club’s Total Team Points as determined by the relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission.

“VFA senior representative team” refers to the VFA’s Premier representative team only.

Victorian affiliated Community Club means a Community Club affiliated to a Victorian based Metropolitan League or Region Commission by way of an authorised licence or affiliation agreement.

3. Affiliated Metropolitan League/Region Commission Responsibilities

Each Metropolitan League or Region Commission affiliated to AFL Victoria:

Total Team Points

- 3.1. acknowledge that the Total Team Points allocation will be capped at 47 points per Senior Team subject to the conditions of this clause 3.
- 3.2. will consider all applications from Community Clubs for the allocation of additional Total Team Points in accordance with this PPS Policy (i.e. applications based on unique local circumstances under clause 4.5).
- 3.3. may allocate additional points or apply deductions to Total Team Points to specific Community Clubs in accordance with this PPS Policy to manage unique local conditions and meet the needs of local Community Clubs and the relevant senior Competitions.
- 3.4. acknowledge that any decision to exceed the 47 point Total Team Points cap must be approved by the CCSP subcommittee.
- 3.5. will allocate the final figure for Total Team Points to each Senior Team for each Club affiliate (i.e. not reserves or underage Competitions) for the following Season and in accordance with PPS Policy, with all points allocations to be lodged with the CCSP subcommittee by 30th June each calendar year.
- 3.6. subject to approval of Total Team Points via the CCSP subcommittee, Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions must communicate the allocation of each Club's Total Team Points to each of their affiliate Clubs for the following Season in accordance with PPS Policy by 31st July in each calendar year (or such other date as determined by the CCSP subcommittee).

Player Points Allocation

- 3.7. will liaise with Community Club's to ensure Player Point Allocations are entered via the Footyweb System prior to any player's first Senior Home and Away Match of each Season and will review the Player Point Allocations entered by the Community Club.
- 3.8. as part of the Player Point Allocation process, Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions may provide the opportunity for Clubs to seek a reassessment of any player's Player Point Allocation. Any reassessment against a Player Point Allocation should be made to the relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission no later than 5 days before the player's first Senior Home and Away Match of each Season.
- 3.9. once the process in clauses 3.7 and 3.8 has been undertaken, any player's Player Point Allocation will be fixed for that Season unless the Metropolitan League or Region Commission is of the view that there are exceptional circumstances relevant to a player that warrant an amendment of the Player Point Allocation during the Season.

4. Affiliated Club Responsibilities

Each affiliate Community Club:

- 4.1. will determine each player's Player Points Allocation for its Senior Team. This determination may include any additions or deductions applicable to each player in accordance with this PPS Policy. See clauses 6 and 7 and appendices 12.1 and 12.3 for applicable PPS table and flow chart to assist in this process.
- 4.2. will enter Player Points Allocations into each relevant player's membership details using the Footyweb System prior to the relevant Community Club's First Home and Away Match of each Season, or a player's first Senior Home and Away Match of each Season.
- 4.3. acknowledges that if a Community Club does not follow this procedure and decides to play a player in a match in a Senior Competition, who has not had their Player Points Allocation reviewed and entered into the Footyweb System, that Club will bear the risk of any subsequent enforcement penalty as determined by the relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission in accordance with this PPS Policy.

- 4.4. will ensure that on match days the Senior Team does not exceed that Club's Total Team Points. For the avoidance of doubt, Community Clubs may recruit above their allocated points in any given Season but must comply with the Total Team Points allocation on match days.
- 4.5. may make an application to its affiliate Metropolitan League or Region Commission for the allocation of additional Total Team Points in accordance with this PPS Policy (i.e. for unique local circumstances). The application process is to be set down and communicated to affiliate Clubs by the relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission.

5. Player Points Categories

- 5.1. A player's Category and the subsequent Player Points Allocation will be determined by that player's playing history and achievements and is structured in a way to promote player retention and loyalty.
- 5.2. Each player expected to play in the Senior Team of a Community Club will be allocated a Category and a Player Points Allocation as follows:

5.2.1. Category 1 – Home Player – 1 Point

- a) Player who has played 40 or more games over a minimum of 3 seasons at the aligned junior club up to and including U17 Competition; or
- b) Player who has played a minimum of 5 games in each of any 5 consecutive seasons for the club or the aligned junior club up to and including Under 19's or
- c) A player who has played only at that Community Club or an aligned junior club, and for no other Community Club; or
- d) A player who has not played Competitive Football in the previous 36 months .

NOTE: Under the Category 1 definition, a player may be categorised as a 'home player' at more than one Community Club.

- 5.3. If a player does not meet the Category 1 'home player' eligibility above, their points Category will be assessed based on the highest playing level achieved prior to the player joining the current club in the following Categories:

5.3.1. Category 6 – AFL Player – 6 Points

Player who has played a minimum of one AFL game in any of the current or previous three (3) Seasons.

5.3.2. Category 5 – State League Tier One – 5 Points

Player who has played a minimum 5 senior games of VFL, WAFL or SANFL in any of the current or previous three (3) seasons.

For example a player *would not qualify* in this category for the 2021 Season if that player has played as follows in the previous three (3) Seasons:

Season 2020 – 4 games
 Season 2019 – 3 games
 Season 2018 – 2 games

However, a player *would* qualify in this category for the 2021 Season if that player had played as follows in the previous three (3) Seasons:

Season 2020 – 0 games
 Season 2019 – 6 games
 Season 2018 – 2 games; or

Season 2020 – 5 games
 Season 2019 – 0 games
 Season 2018 – 0 games.

NOTE: where a Category refers to “a minimum of 5 games in any of the previous 3 Seasons”, the above calculation example will apply.

5.3.3. Category 4 – NAB League, State League Tier Two, and Premium Community Player – 4 Points

- a) NAB League player - who has played a minimum 5 NAB League games in any of the current or previous three (3) Seasons; or
- b) State League Tier Two player – who has played a minimum of 5 senior games in any of the current or previous three (3) seasons at NEAFL or TSL level; or
- c) Premium Community player – who has achieved a club senior best and fairest top 5 finish, in senior Competitions only, in the previous Season. Note: VAFA Senior Representative Team players from the current Season or the Season immediately prior also fall under this Category.

5.3.4. Category 3 – Senior Community Player and Transferred Junior Player – 3 Points

- a) Senior Community player – who has played the same number or more senior games than reserves games in total, over the current and previous three (3) Seasons at community football level. This also includes:
 - Previous VFL development league players who do not meet Category 5 eligibility (i.e. who haven't played the minimum of 5 senior VFL games in any of the current or previous 3 Seasons); or
 - A player from any of the interstate community league Competitions including the Northern Territory Football League.
- b) Transferred Junior – a player who was recruited from an U19's (or younger) Competition and who does not meet Category 1 eligibility.

5.3.5. Category 2 – Development Community Player – 2 Points

A player who has played more reserves games than senior games in total, over the current and previous three (3) Seasons at community football level.

5.4. A Community Club that has a player that does not meet any of the above player Categories will need to apply to their affiliate Metropolitan League or Region Commission to determine the appropriate Player Points Allocation. In determining the Player Points Allocation, the Metropolitan League or Region Commission will have regard to all relevant factors so as not to unreasonably restrict the player's movement between Community Clubs or a player's opportunity to play football at a Club of his choice.

5.5. For the purposes of a Player Points Allocation, a playing coach or playing assistant coach is classified as a player and will be assessed under the above Categories.

5.6. A player playing on an Interchange Agreement as detailed at clause 3.10 of the National Player Transfer Regulations (i.e. a permit player) will be assessed on the same basis as transferred players.

6. Additional player point allocations:

6.1. If a player transfers to a Community Club and will be competing against their immediate former Community Club, (except Category 2 - Development Community Players) an additional one point penalty will apply.

6.2. Subject to prior approval by the CCSP subcommittee, a Metropolitan League or Region Commission may apply an additional two points (instead of one point under clause 6.1) as required by the unique local conditions in order to meet an objective of this PPS Policy. This two point addition is a discretionary rule and it is the responsibility of the Metropolitan League or Region Commission to communicate to its affiliate Clubs if implemented. For the avoidance of doubt, the one point addition is not discretionary.

6.3. If a player transfers from a Community Club located in a Premier Competition to a Community Club in a non-premier competition an additional one point penalty will apply. This clause does not apply to Category 3 – Transferred Junior Player, or if the player is transferring from a Premier Competition, but has already met the definition of a State League Category 5 or NAB League Category 4 player due to playing on a permit at the higher level.

Premier Community Football Competitions include:

- Eastern Football League Premier Division
- Essendon District Football League Premier Division
- Northern Football Netball League Division One
- Southern Football Netball League Division One
- Victorian Amateur Football Association Premier Division
- Western Region Football League Division One
- Ballarat Football Netball League
- Bendigo Football Netball League
- Geelong Football Netball League
- Gippsland Football League
- Goulburn Valley League
- Hampden Football Netball League
- Murray Football League
- Ovens and Murray Football Netball League
- Mornington Peninsula Football Netball League – Division One
- AFL Outer East – Premier Division
- Any other Competition as determined by CSSP subcommittee from time to time.

- 6.4.** Where a player has registered at three (3) or more different Community Clubs in three (3) seasons, one additional point will be applied to that player's Player Points Allocation. In determining the 3 season's timeframe, clubs shall assess the current or upcoming season as the first season along with the previous two (2) seasons, as detailed in the example below.

Club A – 2021 season
 Club B – 2020 season
 Club C – 2019 season

For the avoidance of doubt, player movements under a permit arrangement e.g. to a State League, NAB League, NTFL club or under local interchange agreements, where their home club is classified as a Victorian affiliated Community Club, will not be penalised under this clause.

- 6.5.** A Community Club may make an application for a re-assessment under clause 7.3 to its affiliate Metropolitan League or Region Commission in relation to a player's additional point allocation.

7. Deductions and Amendments to player points allocation:

- 7.1.** Once a player's Player Points Allocation has been determined, a reduction of one point will apply for each 'Season of Service' to that player's Community Club (minimum 5 senior or reserves games per Season), even if not in consecutive years, until the player reaches not less than 1 point. (This is the minimum number of points a player can have). For the avoidance of doubt, if a player is eligible for underage football at his Club, they must play 5 senior games to meet the criteria for a Season of Service point reduction.
- 7.2.** Where a player qualifies in more than one Category based on their playing history in the current Season or any of the previous 3 Seasons, the Category with the highest points will apply, hence the use of the flow chart in appendix 12.3. (Category 1 - Home Players are excluded).
- 7.3.** Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions may, acting reasonably, reassess an individual player's Player Points Allocation where it is deemed inappropriate based on playing history and circumstances. In addition, Community Clubs may make an application detailing relevant evidence regarding the reassessment of a player to its relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission. The application for reassessment may be based upon of the following:
- (a) The age of the player, especially if the player is looking to play at a higher level
 - (b) The injury history of the player
 - (c) The recent playing history of the player
 - (d) The living, schooling and work arrangements of the player; or
 - (e) Any other relevant consideration.

Meeting one of the above criteria may not, on its own, provide for a reduction in a player's point allocation with the application to substantiate that the point allocation is inappropriate based on the Players playing history and achievements.

- 7.4. A League on behalf of an affiliated club, may also make an application to receive a points reduction to a player's Player Points Allocation in relation to a player transitioning into or out of a Club aligned with a school or tertiary institution. Such application must be provided to the CCSP Sub Committee for consideration and approval or disapproval.
- 7.5. Subject to the considerations which the Metropolitan League or Region Commission should take into account under clause 7.3, the determination of an application for reassessment will be at the discretion of the relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission.
- 7.6. Should a player be recruited from a Victorian affiliate Community Club which participates in a community Competition which has not adopted the PPS Policy by 30th September, that player will have a value of one point to a Community Club which has adopted the PPS Policy. Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions, at their discretion may review this one point allocation particularly where the playing history of that player includes prior participation in Competitions that have adopted this PPS Policy.

Note: Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions should communicate to their members which Leagues have adopted the Policy by 30th September each year.

8. Total Team Points

- 8.1. Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions will undertake their own process of Total Team Points allocations and will be responsible for determining Total Team Points for their affiliate Senior Competitions and Clubs. As stated under clause 3.4. Total Team Points should only exceed 47 points and for legitimate circumstances necessary to achieve the evenness and equalisations objectives of this PPS Policy. Any alterations to a Community Club's Total Team Points cap for any other reason must be prior approved by the CCSP subcommittee.
- 8.2. In order to determine team variances to a Senior Competitions Total Team Points' cap, Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions should adopt the following guiding principles regarding the additional allocation or reduction of Total Team Points to a Community Club:
 - 8.2.1. Additional total team points may be allocated to a Community Club which is located in a region with a low population base.
 - 8.2.2. Additional total team points may be allocated if a Community Club did not qualify for finals in previous seasons or has been promoted from previous seasons.
 - 8.2.3. Reduction of total team points may be applied when a club has achieved multiple premierships and/or sustained success over previous seasons.
 - 8.2.4. Additional total team points may be allocated if a Community Club endures significant hardship, lack of success, is coming out of recess, or is a recently merged or restructured entity.
 - 8.2.5. Additional total team points may be allocated where a Community Club has no U18, U19 or younger underage sides and is not capable of developing a junior program due to reasons outside of its control, or if a Community Club is aligned with a university and the team is based around players coming and going over a 3-4 year period.
- 8.3. For each match, a Club must ensure that the Total Team Points allocation is calculated based on the maximum number of players allowed to participate in a match for that Competition and this should be consistent for each match within a Season, within each Competition. For example, if the maximum number of players on match days for the Competition is 22 players, a Club cannot submit a team list of 21 players to meet the Total Team Points cap. For the avoidance of doubt, a Club must list the maximum number of players allowed on its team sheet in calculating its Total Team Points. For exceptional circumstances (i.e. not having enough players to field a full Senior Team) the matter should be referred to the Metropolitan League or Region Commission for review and direction.

9. Implementation

- 9.1. Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions should adopt this PPS Policy by no later than 30 September. Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions must advise in writing to the CCSP subcommittee of its intention to implement the PPS Policy prior to this date.

- 9.2. Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions are free to publicise Total Team Points to affiliate Clubs for the following year at their own discretion once approved by the CCSP subcommittee.

10. Enforcement

- 10.1. Given Player Points Allocations will be managed via the Footyweb System, if correct procedure is applied, with Players Points Allocation entered into the system prior to the start of the Season, it is envisaged there will be minimal issues in the management of the Player Points Allocations. Errors are less likely given that Footyweb will not permit a club to complete a Senior Team into an electronic team sheet that has a combined Total Team Points allocation of more than that Club's permitted point's cap.
- 10.2. Should any Club make a false or incorrect declaration regarding Player Points Allocations, the Club may be penalised by the Metropolitan League or Region Commission in line with the penalties set out in clause 10.3.
- 10.3. Penalties may include (without limitation):
- (a) Club fines
 - (b) Relegation (when in a divisional competition)
 - (c) Loss of premiership points – current season and in the future
 - (d) Suspension from finals – current season and in the future
 - (e) Player / Official suspensions – for those players/ officials that provide false information to the Club;
 - (f) Any other penalty determined by the Metropolitan League or Region Commission or the CCSP subcommittee from time to time.

In applying any enforcements provisions in relation to any breach of the PPS Policy, Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commission shall take into consideration whether the breach was assessed as:

- Unintentional - where a club had not been provided with accurate information.
- Interpretive - where a club had applied the policy in a manner than was the policy was not intended.
- Intentional - where a clear breach had occurred with little or no regard to the requirements of the policy.

11. Appeal and Review

- 11.1. Where a Community Club is of the view that a player's Player Points Allocation is deemed inappropriate under this PPS Policy following a reassessment conducted under clause 7.3 of this policy, any appeal against that Player Points Allocation must be heard by that Metropolitan League or Region Commission under their own appeals process.
- 11.2. Where a Club is of the view that its own Total Team Points is deemed inappropriate following a reassessment under Clause 8.2 of this Policy, any appeal against that Total Team Points allocation must be heard by that Metropolitan League or Region Commission under their own appeals process.
- 11.3. An appeal against a decision to apply an enforcement provision under this PPS Policy should be made via the AFL Victoria Club Development and Operations Manager within fourteen (14) days of any enforcement application be applied and will be reviewed by a panel appointed by the AFL Victoria.
- 11.4. The CCSP subcommittee will review the PPS Policy throughout each Season and amendments and variations may be made by the CCSP subcommittee from time to time.

12. Appendices

12.1. Player Points Categories Tables

PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM – CATAGORIES AND DEFINITIONS			
Category 6	6 points	AFL Player	Played at least one AFL game in any of the current or previous 3 seasons.
Category 5	5 points	State League Tier 1 - VFL, WAFL, SANFL	Played at least 5 senior games of VFL, WAFL or SANFL in any of the current or previous 3 seasons
Category 4	4 points	NAB League	Played at least 5 NAB League games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons
		State League Tier 2 - NEAFL, TASFL	Played at least 5 senior games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons
		Premium Community Player	Achieved top 5 finish in club Senior B&F in the previous season. Note: VAFA Senior representative team player also falls under this category
Category 3	3 points	Senior Community Player	Played the same or more senior than reserves games in total over the current and previous 3 seasons. Also includes VFL Development League Players not meeting Category 5 State League definition and Interstate Community Leagues including NTFL.
		Transferred Junior	Player recruited from an U19's or younger competition and does not meet the Category 1 home club definition
Category 2	2 points	Development Community Player	Played more reserves games than senior games in total, over the current and previous three (3) Seasons at community football level
Category 1	1 point	Home Player	Played 40 or more games over a minimum 3 seasons at that club or aligned junior club up to and including U17 competitions
			Player who has played a minimum of 5 games in each of the 5 consecutive seasons for the club or the aligned junior club up to and including Under 19's
			Player who has only played at that club or aligned junior club.
			Player who hasn't played Competitive football in the previous 36 months.

Note: For any player that does not meet any of the above categories will need to apply to the affiliated Metropolitan League / Region Commission who will determine the appropriate categories and points

Additional Penalty Player Points	Additional 1 point	If transferring from another community club and will be competing against their immediate former club (does not include Category 2 Development Community Player) Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions may increase this to an additional 2 penalty points subject to approval by AFL Victoria.
	Additional 1 point	Is transferring from a club located in a premier competition to a club in a non-premier competition (does not apply to Category 3 – Transferred Junior Player, Category 5 – State League or Category 4 – NAB League player)
	Additional 1 point	If registered at three (3) or more different Community Clubs in the current or previous two (2) seasons. Does not include players moving on permit (e.g.: VFL, NAB League, NTFL or Local Interchange Agreement) as detailed in clause 6.4.

Deductions for Player Points	Deduct 1 point	For each season of service to the club (minimum 5 senior or reserves games per season), even if not in consecutive years, until the player reaches 1 point Note: if the player is eligible for underage football at that club, it must play 5 senior games to meet the criteria for a year of service.
Note: Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commission may reassess an individual players points classification where it is deemed inappropriate based on playing history		
Note: Where a player qualifies in more than one category based on their playing history in the previous 3 seasons, the category with the highest points will apply, hence the use of the flow chart. (Home players are excluded).		

Definition of Junior Aligned Club	Where seniors and juniors exist under the same constitution, or where there is a memorandum of understanding in place between standalone senior and junior clubs that is approved by a Metropolitan League or Region Commission. Senior clubs can have multiple MOU's with junior clubs and junior clubs could have multiple MOU's with senior clubs. All MOU's must be approved by Metropolitan Leagues or Region Commissions in country areas to ensure appropriate player pathways exist.	
Premier Community Competitions * Note: this includes Development Community recruited from these competitions.	Metropolitan	Country
	Eastern FNL Premier Division	AFL Outer East Premier Division
	Essendon D.F.L Premier Div.	Ballarat FNL
	Northern FNL Division 1	Bendigo FNL
	Southern F.N.L Division 1	Geelong FNL
	VAFA Premier Division	Gippsland FL
	Western Region F.L Division 1	Goulburn Valley L
		Hampden FNL
		Murray FL
		Ovens & Murray FNL
		Mornington Peninsula FNL – Division 1

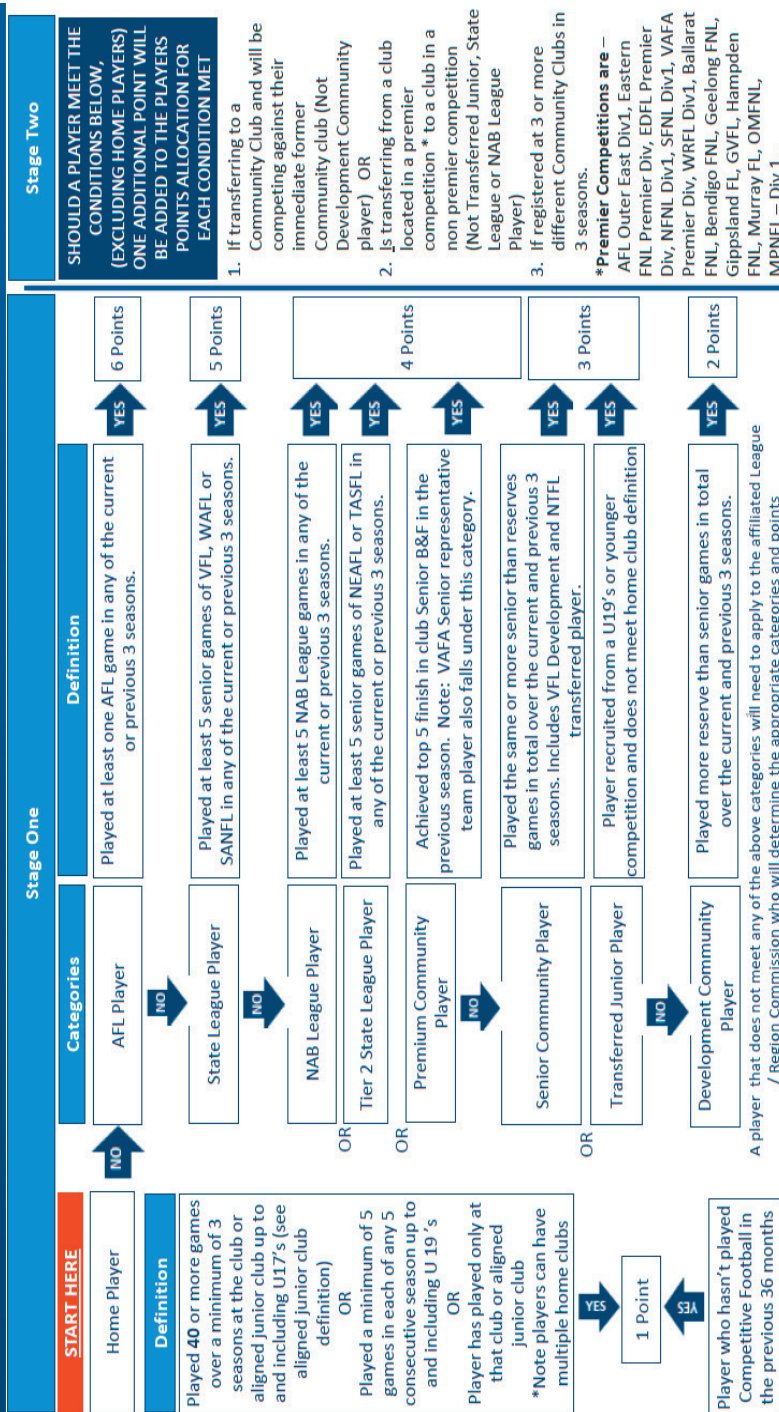
12.2. Total Team Points Allocation Tables

Metropolitan Leagues and Region Commissions may choose to adopt any of these types of clauses below based upon unique local conditions when allocating total team points;

Total Team Points Allowances / Reductions Consistent with clause 8.2	Small population base	Additional points to team allocation where the club is located in a region with a low population base
	Ladder Position	Additional points to team allocation if team did not qualify for finals in previous season or has been promoted from previous season
		Reduction in points to team allocation for multiple premierships and/or sustained success over previous seasons.
		Additional points to team allocation where a club endures significant hardship, lack of success, is coming out of recess or is a recently merged or restructured entity.
	Junior Pathway	Additional points to team allocation where a club has no U18/19 or younger underage sides aligned (MOU in place) to it, and not capable of developing a junior program due to reasons outside of its control, or if a club is aligned with a university and the team is based around players coming a going over a 3-4 year period.

12.3 – Player Points Assessment Flowchart

To assist in allocating points to players, the following flow chart has been developed to assess players based on their playing history prior to being recruited to a community club. After point allocations, a Season of Service Deduction may then be applied.



12.4 - Senior / Junior club Memorandum of Understanding



SENIOR / JUNIOR CLUB ALIGNMENT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made on the _____ day of _____ 20__.

BETWEEN _____ FOOTBALL CLUB INC.
(“Senior Club”)

AND _____ FOOTBALL CLUB INC.
(“Junior Club”)

(the Parties)

The Senior Club is an affiliated Senior member of the _____ Football League Inc.

The Junior Club is an affiliated Junior member of the _____ Football League Inc.

1. Background

- A. Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited (**AFL Victoria**) has implemented a Player Points System Policy (**PPS Policy**) to support community football club sustainability, equalisation of community football competitions and to promote junior development (**Objectives**).
- B. The Junior Club party to this Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**) will be recognised as an “**Aligned Junior Club**” in accordance with the PPS.
- C. An Aligned Junior Club player is eligible for Player Point Allocation categorisation in accordance with the PPS as amended by AFL Victoria from time to time.
- D. The Parties agree to comply with the terms and conditions set out in this MOU and the Objectives of the PPS.
- E. Each Party will cooperate to maximize the opportunities for junior players to move to senior football through the Senior Club’s pathway competition (e.g. Under 19/ Under 18). This may include permit arrangements approved by the affiliated governing bodies where players are still eligible to play junior football.

2. Commencement of Agreement

The Parties agree that this MOU shall commence from dd/mm/yyyy, and following signing by relevant Clubs, Region Commissions, Metropolitan Leagues and AFL Victoria as applicable

Please note that any Junior games played prior to this date with the Junior club detailed in this MoU will not be included in assessing if a junior player meets the requirements of the Home Player category.

3. Adoption of Name and Emblem (optional)

The Senior / Junior Club agrees to change its name to _____ Football Club Inc.

The Senior / Junior Club agrees to adopt the _____ emblem.

The Senior / Junior Club agrees to adopt the _____ Jumper design and colours.

4. Representation at Meetings (optional and as applicable)

Consistent with the relevant Region Commission's or Metropolitan League's rules and regulations, the Parties shall be represented at the relevant meetings of their affiliated bodies as follows:

Region Commission or Metropolitan League meetings

Senior Club nominee _____

Junior Club nominee _____

Senior Club League meetings

Senior Club nominee _____

Junior Club nominee _____

Junior Club League meetings

Senior Club nominee _____

Junior Club nominee _____

5. Income, Expenditure, Sponsorship and Fundraising

All income, expenditure, sponsorship and fundraising shall be conducted separately between the Parties and is the sole responsibility of each Party.

6. Tenancy Arrangements

A. Arrangements for Match days

Senior matches will take place on (day) at (venue) between xx pm and xx pm.

Junior matches will take place on (day) at (venue) between xx pm and xx pm.

B. Arrangements for Training (Regular Season, April – September)

Senior training will take place on _____ and _____ at (venue) between xx pm and xx pm

Junior training will take place on _____ and _____ at (venue) between xx pm and xx pm

C. Pre-Season (including practice matches)

Senior training will take place on _____ and _____ at (venue) between xx pm and xx pm
Junior training will take place on _____ and _____ at (venue) between xx pm and xx pm

D. Sharing of costs – Pavilion /Utilities /Ground

Venue hire and related costs will be borne by the Parties in accordance with existing arrangements between a Party and relevant council or third party. The Parties will work together to share costs and usage of venues and facilities.

E. Venue

Senior Club allocation of costs based on usage _____%
Junior clubs allocation of costs based on usage _____%

7. Support Programs

The Parties will support the pathway available to junior players that wish to progress to senior football. Programs the parties may undertake to assist with this pathway include, but are not limited to:

- Senior player attendance at Junior training
- Senior player attendance at Auskick sessions
- Junior team playing half time grid games at senior home games
- Junior player(s) team mascot for Senior Teams
- Senior Club Memberships or Junior players and parents
- Develop buddy system for Senior and Junior players
- Support at relevant club presentation events e.g.: Trophy Donation
- Information session for players transitioning from junior to senior club
- Players from the Under 16/17's teams occasionally training or playing with the Under 18/19's teams
- Sharing and maintenance of equipment
- Senior Match Day invitations for players and parents from Under 16' / 17s teams, for example breakfast while watching the Under 18/19's or lunch at a Senior home game.
- Involvement at each Parties social events during the season

The Parties will implement support programs as follows:

8. Meetings and Communications

A. Liaison Officer

The Parties shall each nominate a Liaison Officer to be present at the other Party's committee meetings.

B. Committee Meetings

Each Party shall hold monthly committee meetings during the football season.

9. Arbitration Committee

A. The Parties agree that:

- (i) should any dispute or conflict arise in connection with this MOU or the PPS between any member, official or committee of a Party; or
- (ii) if any decision has to be made that would affect either Party in relation to this MOU or the PPS, then the Arbitration Committee shall meet to approve the decision or resolve the dispute as soon as practicable.

B. The Arbitration Committee shall comprise the following members:

- (i) the President and the Secretary of the Senior Club;
- (ii) the President and the Secretary of the Junior Club; and
- (iii) for disputes or conflicts, within the same Region Commission or Metropolitan League, a person nominated by the Region General Manager or CEO of the Region Commission / Metropolitan League that the Senior/ Junior Club is affiliated with.
- (iv) for disputes or conflicts, within the across different Region Commissions or Metropolitan Leagues, the matter may be referred to AFL Victoria whose decision shall be final and binding.

C. The Parties acknowledge that if a matter arises in relation to this MoU or the PPS that can't be resolved by the Arbitration Committee, the matter shall be referred to AFL Victoria whose decision shall be final and binding.

10. Amendment

This MoU may not be varied except by a written instrument duly executed on behalf of each Party.

11. Assignment

A Party shall not assign or transfer their rights, benefits or obligations contained in this MOU without the prior written consent of the Party's relevant Metropolitan League or Region Commission.

12. No Partnership, No Agency

Each of the Parties shall in all other respects, remain independent of each other and nothing in this MoU shall be construed as creating a relationship of partnership, principal and agent or of trustee and beneficiary.

13. General

Detail of any other MoU that Junior club has in place

Other Senior Club _____ MoU Date of Effect: dd/mm/yyyy

Detail of any other MoU Senior club has in place

Other Junior Club _____ MoU Date of Effect: dd/mm/yyyy

Detail of additional arrangements where Junior club has multiple MoUs signed with Senior Club
e.g : Limitation on the Home player classification with Senior clubs.
(to be completed by Region Commission / Metro league Clubs are affiliated with)

The Parties acknowledge that words and definitions defined in the PPS shall bear the same meaning in this MOU and to the extent of any inconsistency between this MoU and the PPS, the PPS shall take priority.

SIGNED for an on behalf of _____ **Football Club Inc. (Senior Club)**

..... President Name
..... President Signature / /Date of signing
..... Witness Name
..... Witness Signature / /Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of _____ **Football Club Inc. (Junior Club)**

..... President Name
..... President Signature / /Date of signing
..... Witness Name
..... Witness Signature / /Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of AFL (enter Region) Region Commission Inc.(where affiliated)

..... Chairpersons name
..... President Signature / /Date of signing
..... Witness Name
..... Witness Signature / /Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of _____ Football League Inc.(Metropolitan League as relevant)

..... Chairpersons Name
..... Chairpersons Signature / /Date of signing
..... Witness Name
..... Witness Signature / /Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of _____ Football League Inc. (Metropolitan Junior League as relevant)

..... Chairpersons Name
..... Chairpersons Signature / /Date of signing
..... Witness Name
..... Witness Signature / /Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of AFL Victoria

(where Senior and Junior clubs are affiliated with the same Region Commission or Metropolitan League and / or where a Junior or Senior Club has multiple MoU's in place)

..... Club Sustainability Manager
..... Signature / /Date of signing
..... Witness Name
..... Witness Signature / /Date of signing

NATIONAL AGE DISPENSATION POLICY



October
2018



PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this *Age Dispensation Policy (Policy)* is to provide access to Australian football for all Australians regardless of their ability. Nothing in this Policy should be read as limiting the types of adjustments that might be considered to accommodate this access.
- B. The AFL and State Football Bodies recognise that it may be appropriate in some circumstances for reasonable adjustments to be made in order for a person with a Disability or with Physical Size or Development Considerations to be able to effectively participate in Australian football including, where appropriate, providing dispensation to allow an individual to play in an Australian football competition below their chronological age.
- C. This Policy should be adopted by each Football Body to achieve this purpose and to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to age dispensation across Australian football.

1. Application

1.1 Scope

This Policy applies to an Australian Football League that is conducted or administered by:

- (a) a State or Territory League or body that is affiliated with the AFL, including:
 - (i) NSW/ACT: AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Ltd ACN 086 839 385;
 - (ii) NT: AFL Northern Territory Ltd ACN 097 620 525;
 - (iii) QLD: AFL Queensland ACN 090 629 342;
 - (iv) SA: South Australian National Football League Inc ABN 59 518 757 737;
 - (v) TAS: Football Tasmania Limited ACN 085 213 350;
 - (vi) Victoria: Australian Football League (Victoria) Ltd ACN 147 664 579;
 - (vii) WA: West Australian Football Commission Inc ABN 51 167 923 136; or
- (b) an entity or body that is affiliated with (or licensed by) a State Football Body,
 - (each a **Football Body**).

1.2 Operation

All Members of a Football Body (including players, coaches, officials and administrators) and other Persons must comply with this Policy in considering a request made by a person with a Disability or with Physical Size or Development Considerations for age dispensation.

2. Definitions and interpretation

2.1 Definitions

Certificate means a written statement from a physician or other medically qualified health care provider which attests to the result of a medical examination of a patient and can serve as evidence of a health condition.

Club means an Australian football club fielding a team within a Competition conducted by a Football Body.

Competition means an Australian football competition (including AFL 9s and Masters competitions) conducted or administered by a Football Body, League or Football Body affiliate (e.g. Region Commission).

Disability means: a disability as defined in the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* (Cth) or in any state-based statute applicable to a particular Football Body (in each case as amended from time to time).

League means an Australian football league or a Football Body who conducts or administers a Competition.

Medical Specialist means a doctor who has completed advanced education and clinical training in a specified area of medicine and includes a Paediatrician or Sports Physician, or a League approved general medical practitioner.

Paediatrician means a medical practitioner who specialises in medical care and treatment for children and babies.

Physical Size or Development Considerations means, for a Player, that Player has a body mass index (i.e. divide Player's weight (in kilograms) by Player's height (in metres squared)) under the 5th percentile for that Player's age as measured by a sports dietitian, clinical exercise physiologist or other appropriately qualified Medical Specialist.

Sports Physician means a medical practitioner who specialises in the treatment of injuries resulting from athletic activities.

State Football Body means the governing State and Territory bodies affiliated with the AFL as listed in paragraph 1.1(a).

2.2 Interpretation

- (a) Headings and indexes are only included for ease of reference and do not affect interpretation.
- (b) All capitalised terms in this Policy are to be interpreted consistently with the Member Protection Policy, unless otherwise provided.

3. Application Process

- (a) A Player who wishes to apply for dispensation to play in a Competition below their applicable age group on the basis of a Disability or for Physical Size or Development Considerations must make an application through the Player's Club, to the relevant League.
- (b) Application is to be made on the form prescribed by the League and must be supported by a Certificate from an appropriately qualified Medical Specialist in an area of practice that is directly related to the dispensation being sought. Such Certificate must state the basis for and reasons to support the request for the Player to play down a Competition age group, having regard to all relevant matters pertaining to the Player, including:
 - (i) the Player's Disability and/or;
 - (ii) the Player's Physical Size or Development Considerations; and

- (iii) the qualifications of the person providing the Certificate.
- (c) In accordance with this Policy, the League may:
 - (i) approve the application including for a specified period of time;
 - (ii) refuse the application;
 - (iii) request additional information from the Player or from the Club, to enable it to more fully consider the application.

4. Relevant Factors in Determining an Application

In considering an Application for an age dispensation, the League will have regard to the following factors:

- (a) the effect of the Player's Disability or Physical Size or Development Considerations on their capacity to effectively participate in Australian Football;
- (b) how it is proposed that the grant of age dispensation will support the Player to overcome any barriers to their effective participation in Australian Football arising from the Player's Disability or Physical Size or Development Considerations;
- (c) the availability of other assistance to the Player to enable them to effectively participate in Australian Football; and
- (d) any other relevant circumstances.

5. Effect of an Approved Application

- (a) Any Player whose request for dispensation is approved (the **Permitted Player**) will be allocated to an appropriate lower competition age group. Unless medical advice is received to the contrary or other exceptional circumstances apply, a Permitted Player should be allocated to the next lowest Competition age group.
- (b) If the Permitted Player subsequently plays in a higher age group than originally approved, any approval to play in a lower Competition age group is automatically withdrawn.
- (c) Approvals granted under this Policy are for the season in which the approval is granted.
- (d) The League may on reasonable grounds revoke the dispensation granted at any time, provided that the reasons for such revocation are provided to the Permitted Player.

6. Appeals

- (a) Clubs or Players may appeal decisions of a League to the relevant appeal body in accordance with the relevant State Football Body's rules and regulations.
- (b) A Player and/ or Club may only appeal to the relevant appeal body in respect of a decision made by a League on one or more of the following grounds:
 - (i) that there was an error of law; or
 - (ii) that the decision was so unreasonable that no League acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it.

ANNEXURE A – NON- EXHAUSTIVE EXAMPLES OF COMMON DISABILITIES

In an effort to provide practical guidance to administrators, the following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the more common disabilities which may give rise to grounds for granting age dispensation to a player. For the avoidance of doubt, this list is in no way considered an exhaustive list of potential disabilities which may give rise to age dispensation under the policy, and the potential kinds of disability which may constitute a disability for the purposes of the policy are not limited to those examples listed below.

1. Physical disabilities

(a) Amputee

Amputee refers to a person who has lost a limb, part of a limb or more than one limb.

(b) Cerebral Palsy

(i) Cerebral palsy is a non-progressive disability caused by damage to a part of the brain that controls physical movement so that normal, smooth muscle movement does not or may not always occur.

(ii) Cerebral palsy can vary in presentation from a mild to moderate form affecting one or two limbs, to severe forms affecting the whole body.

(c) Wheelchair Reliance

(i) People may need to use a wheelchair for various reasons including:

(A) Spinal injury – injury to the spinal cord;

(B) Spina bifida – a neural tube defect which may be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors;

(C) Muscular dystrophy – a group of hereditary and genetic muscle diseases which may create a disability relating to progressive muscle weakness;

(D) Cerebral Palsy; and

(E) Double leg amputations.

(d) Transplant

(i) A transplant occurs when a healthy human organ is used to replace a diseased or seriously affected organ in a recipient human being.

(ii) In the case of a transplant medical considerations and restrictions would dictate the safe level of sporting activity available to an affected Person within certain limitations.

(e) Acquired Brain Injury

An acquired brain injury (**ABI**) is caused during or after birth rather than as part of a genetic or congenital disorder. An ABI can result in cognitive, physical, emotional, or behavioural impairments that lead to temporary or permanent changes in brain functioning.

(f) Down Syndrome

Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition caused by the presence of all or part of an extra 21st chromosome.

(g) Cystic Fibrosis

Cystic fibrosis (also known as CF or mucoviscidosis) is an autosomal recessive genetic disorder affecting (amongst other things) the lungs.

2. Neurological disabilities

(a) Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a common and diverse set of chronic neurological disorders characterized by seizures. Epileptic seizures result from abnormal, excessive or hypersynchronous neuronal activity in the brain.

(b) Autism spectrum disorders

Autism spectrum disorders (including Asperger syndrome) are a group of related disorders of neural development which may be characterized by impaired social interaction and communication.

3. Intellectual disabilities

(a) Intellectual disability is a disability characterised by “significant” limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

(b) “Significant” impairment in intellectual functioning is sometimes defined as being measured as 2 standard deviations below the mean in respect of certain conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills (as measured by a Medical Specialist).

4. Sensory disabilities

(a) Deaf/hard of hearing

The inability to hear can be partial or complete. Some degree of hearing loss is a common disability and can affect one in twenty adults.

(b) Blind/vision impaired

Light involves both visual acuity and visual field. People with visual acuity in both eyes of less than 6/60 which cannot be improved by glasses are considered legally blind in Australia.

SECTION 3: INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL AND APPEALS BOARD PROCEDURES FOR TRIBUNAL AND APPEAL BOARD MEMBERS

Tribunal Guidelines only!

IMPORTANT: *The relevant rules and regulations contained earlier in AFL Victoria Country Handbook (“AFL Victoria Country rules”) are to be adhered to at all times. The following information is designed to assist in the application of the relevant AFL Victoria Country rules. Where a provision in these guidelines is inconsistent with a provision in AFL Victoria Country Rules, the provision in AFL Victoria Country Rules shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page
1.0 INTRODUCTION	138
2.0 SECTION 2 – INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL	138
2.1 Relevant AFL Victoria Country Rule(s)	138
2.2 League Independent Tribunal Procedure	138
2.3 Practice and Pre-Season Matches	140
2.4 Set Penalties	140
3.0 SECTION 3 – INVESTIGATION OFFICER	140
3.1 Relevant AFL Victoria Country Rule(s)	140
4.0 SECTION 4 – PLAYER CLEARANCE APPEALS	140
4.1 Relevant AFL Victoria Country Rule(s)	140
5.0 SECTION 5 – AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY LEGAL CHALLENGE PROCEDURE	140
APPENDIX 1 - SUGGESTED LEAGUE INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL “RUNNING S	144
Guidelines for Player Advocates	145
Evidence	146
Questioning of Witness	147
Warning	147
APPENDIX 2 - RECOMMENDED ROLE AND PROCEDURE OF INVESTIGATION OFFICER	148
APPENDIX 3 - LEAGUE CHARGE SHEET RESULTING FROM AN INVESTIGATION	150
APPENDIX 4 – NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION (LEAGUE TO SEND TO CLUBS)	151

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We live in what is an increasing litigious world, that is, people in all walks of life are quick to resort to legal action to seek redress of what they see as a wrong done to them. With greater awareness of their rights and a greater access to legal aid, this greater readiness to go to law will continue to increase.

One of the adverse aspects of this tendency is that well-meaning, honorary and amateur Tribunal members are at greater risk of finding themselves unwittingly engaged as Defendants in traumatic, time-consuming, and costly, Supreme Court litigation.

So it behoves those in our community who give of their time and goodwill in accepting honorary positions on Tribunals to take care and to become aware of what is expected of them when they give up a couple of hours on a Tuesday night to hear the case of Player X seeking a clearance from Club Y to Club Z or to hear the case of Player A charged with striking Player B with a clenched fist to the face.

The law expects certain standards of justice from those who accept the challenge of acting as Tribunal members and if one is not prepared to accept a little education in the area of ones responsibilities, it is best that the appointment not be accepted.

It is important that all leagues look at their constitutions to ensure that the Tribunals, are set up in the correct way, are given wide powers and that their powers are beyond legal challenge in terms of delegating power to that Tribunal and to make sure the tribunal is set up in such a way so it can effectively execute its powers, responsibilities and duties accordingly.

The Law does not expect Tribunal members to be expert in the intricacies of criminal law, contract law or administrative law. What the Law expects is that Tribunals will act fairly and responsibly and in accordance with what are commonly called the rules of natural justice. These rules of natural justice are not enshrined in any Act of Parliament which can be read and understood.

They have evolved over centuries of our law and basically can be summed up as meaning that all parties before the Tribunal must be given proper opportunity to be heard, to call all witnesses they desire to call, to question evidence called against them and to have the questions before the Tribunal determined only on the evidence before it and determined without bias or prejudice.

It is important to ask the player and his advocate whether they are satisfied that they have been given the opportunity to lead and give all evidence in the matter.

It is the Tribunal's responsibility to enforce the rules under which the sport is administered and therefore it is imperative that Tribunal members become familiar with AFL Victoria Country rules and their particular league Constitution and Rules, in so far as they affect the issue before the Tribunal.

Remember, it's the Tribunal members who will make the decision which is subject to challenge – not the League Secretary. It is not for a Tribunal to say "Well that rule's pretty silly", so in this case we'll just ignore it and make the decision we think is the fairest.

It's the Clubs who have joined together to make Leagues, who in turn join together to make up AFL Victoria Country. By their own Constitutions and Rules, they have decided how they will be governed. Just as the Courts of Law must interpret the laws which are made by our elected Parliament, and then enforce those laws as they apply to the facts of a case as determined by the Court – so also must a Tribunal decide the facts contested before it, and then apply the laws of the local league and AFL Victoria Country, as interpreted by the Tribunal, to those facts.

AFL Victoria Country rules lay down the procedures to be followed in the hearing of charges and clearance appeals.

To those dedicated people who are members of the Independent Tribunals of affiliated leagues of AFL Victoria Country, AFL Victoria Country extends its appreciation for your significant contribution to our game in this most important role.

AFL Victoria Country trusts the contents of what follows will be of benefit and assistance to you in discharging your onerous responsibilities.

2.0 LEAGUE INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL

2.1 Relevant AFL Victoria Country Rule(s)

(Refer Appendix 1 for sample Tribunal Running Sheet)

The rules and regulations relating to the establishment, jurisdiction and procedure of a League Independent Tribunal are contained in AFL Victoria Country rule 7.0.

2.2 League Independent Tribunal Procedure

Tribunal Procedure – Charges against Players and Officials etc.

The following provisions, which provide guidance for the conduct of a Tribunal hearing, have been prepared by AFL Victoria Country Rules Sub-Committee and shall be adopted by all Affiliated Leagues. For convenience, the guidelines make

reference to a “player” as being the person appearing before the Tribunal, however the guidelines do apply to and should be read as applying to any other person appearing before a Tribunal.

NOTE: All Tribunal Hearings shall be tape recorded and such tapes shall be kept for at least two (2) months. Other than the league official recording no mobile phones are to be used for recording or texting purposes during the course of a tribunal or appeal hearing by anyone present at the hearing.

1. A copy of the Umpires’ report complying with the format of AFL/AFL Victoria Country (Umpires Report Form) must be lodged with or be mailed to the League Secretary not later than midnight on the second day after the match, or as determined by the local league. If the report is not mailed or lodged as stated above, the charge shall lapse and not be heard unless otherwise determined by the Tribunal.

2. Upon assembly before the Tribunal, the Umpire, the offended against player and their advocate; and the charged player and his advocate, shall appear before the Tribunal. The advocates may be delegates or officials of clubs but shall not be a barrister or solicitor.

The Chairman and/or members of the Tribunal may ask questions of any person appearing before the Tribunal as they desire at any time throughout the hearing.

3. The Umpire’s/Investigation Officer’s written report/charge is read by the Chairman who shall be in possession of the team sheets and any other relevant correspondence.

4. At the outset of the Hearing, the Chairman shall:

- (a) ask the player’s advocate whether he has any objection to any member of the Tribunal hearing and determining the matter; and
- (b) read and table the Umpire’s/Investigator’s Report and ask the player’s advocate if he has any objections or submissions in respect of that report.
- (c) ask the umpire/Investigation Officer through his advocate if he now seeks to amend his Report.
- (d) if an objection is raised on an issue, it should be appropriately dealt with by the tribunal at that time.

5. The Tribunal Chairman asks the charged player if he was number of the Football Club on the day and date stated and also asks the same question of any player or players also mentioned in the Umpires Report. The Umpire, charged player and their advocates shall remain and all other parties will retire until recalled.

6. The charged player is then asked to plead guilty or not guilty. This may be done through his Advocate.

7. If the charged player pleads guilty to the charge, then the hearing may proceed with a summary of the facts of the charge by the Umpires Advocate followed by a plea in mitigation of the offence by the charged players advocate. The charged player’s advocate may or may not call the charged player to give evidence in the circumstances.

8. After the player pleads, the Umpire is asked to amplify his report and may be questioned by his advocate. The Umpire Advocate may then call his witnesses (if any) and these witnesses may then be questioned by the player’s Advocate.

9. The offended against player mentioned in the report is then recalled and asked to give his version of the incident and may be questioned by the Umpire’s/Investigation Officer’s advocate; and then the charged player through his advocate.

10. The charged player is then asked to give his version and may be questioned by his advocate; and by the Umpire’s/Investigation Officer’s advocate.

11. The charged player may then through his advocate call his witnesses. Once a witness is called to give evidence, he must remain in the room until the case is finished. Each witness is asked to give his version of the incident and may be questioned by the advocates as desired.

12. After all evidence is given, both advocates are given the opportunity of summing up their cases and when the Tribunal is satisfied that it has all the evidence it needs to enable it to come to a decision, the Tribunal will consider the case and record a finding based on what it believes to be the facts.

13. When this is done, all the parties to the hearing re-assemble and the Chairman announces its finding. If the player is found guilty, his advocate will, on behalf of the player be given the opportunity by the Chairman to make a submission on the question of sanction i.e., to make a plea on behalf of the charged player. The Tribunal Chairman will ask the Tribunal Secretary of the guilty player’s tribunal record. The findings are then determined and recorded and signed by all members of the Tribunal.

14. Players reported for a field offence must attend the next scheduled hearing of the Tribunal. The player cannot play with his club until the case has been heard. Where the Tribunal deems that the player has reasonably been unable to attend the hearing and therefore adjourns the matter the player shall be eligible to play pending resolution of the matter.

15. Telephone evidence may be allowable at the Tribunal Chairman’s discretion.

NOTE: In the absence of an advocate for either the charged player or the Umpire then the player and/or Umpire as the case may be, with the Tribunal's permission, becomes his own advocate.

16. The umpire is required to be present at the Tribunal hearing into the charge(s) he has laid against the player(s). If, due to unforeseen and urgent extenuating circumstances it is not possible for the umpire to be present at the hearing, and, subject to the permission of the Tribunal the Tribunal may proceed with the hearing in the umpires absence. The following rules shall apply in these circumstances:-
 - (a) The Umpire shall forward to the Secretary of the League in addition to the brief written report of the incident, a detailed statement setting out the particulars of the incident in full together with such other relevant information as in the opinion of the Umpire would be of benefit to the Tribunal in enabling it to reach a decision.
 - (b) If the detailed statement is not received by the Secretary of the League at least eight hours prior to the time set down for the Tribunal hearing the charge shall lapse and not be heard unless otherwise determined by the Tribunal.
 - (c) After the brief report has been read as before and the charged player has pleaded, the detailed statement of the Umpire is then read out by the Tribunal, and at the same time a copy of this statement is to be made available to the reported player by the Tribunal Chairman.
 - (d) The Tribunal then hears any witnesses called on behalf of and at the request of the Umpire. These witnesses may be questioned, in turn, as in 8 above.
 - (e) The offended against player is then heard as in 9 above.
 - (f) The charged player then gives his version of the incident and may be questioned as set out in 10 above.
 - (g) The players may then call witnesses and these, in turn, may be questioned as in 11 above.
 - (h) Then the hearing proceeds as set out in 12 and 13.
 - (i) A player shall not be permitted to play with any team during the time of suspension.
17. In the case of a charge made at an interleague or practice match, the Tribunal hearing the charge shall have sole discretion in imposing the sanction and if a suspension is imposed, determining to which matches any suspension will apply.

18. A suspension shall terminate at midnight immediately after the round of matches in which the player's final match of the suspension period is completed.

Note: All Tribunal and Appeal hearings are to be audio taped.

2.3 Practice Match Arrangements

Where a practice or pre-season match is played and a registered field umpire reports a player at or during the match, the following shall apply:-

- (a) The player who is reported must appear before the League Tribunal of the host club or organising League conducting the match. Such League Tribunal shall hear and determine the matter on both the question of liability and sanction.
- (b) Where the practice or pre-season match is hosted by a VFL or VAFA Club, the League Tribunal of the VFL or VAFA, as the case may be, shall hear and determine the issue of liability only. If a report is found proven against a player, the matter shall be referred to the player's League Tribunal on the question of sanction.

2.4 Set Penalties

All AFL Victoria Country affiliated Leagues shall adopt set penalties for reportable offences as contained within AFL Victoria Country regulation 12.0.

3.0 INVESTIGATION OFFICER

3.1 Relevant AFL Victoria Country Rules AFL Victoria Country Rules 5.1 and 5.2

(Refer AFL Victoria Country Rule 5.0 Conduct Unbecoming)

(Refer Appendix 2 - Recommended Role and Procedure of Investigation Officer)

4.0 PLAYER CLEARANCE APPEALS – AREA APPEALS COMMITTEE

4.1 Relevant AFL Victoria Country Rules

The relevant rules and regulations relating to player clearance appeals are contained in AFL Victoria Country Rules 7.0 and 8.0).

5. AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY LEGAL CHALLENGE PROCEDURE

AFL Victoria Country recommends that when an affiliated body is threatened with Legal action against it, relating to its direct affiliation to AFL Victoria Country, the following action be taken:

- (i) Immediately notice is received of any legal threat, the Club shall immediately advise JLT Insurance and AFL Victoria Country through the local AFL Victoria Country Football Development Manager, of the legal threat, and provide to JLT Insurance

and AFL Victoria Country any papers, letters, summonses, statements of claim, affidavits, or any other legal papers together with the advice from its own Solicitor, at the time of advising AFL Victoria Country.

- (ii) AFL Victoria Country may arrange for its own advice on the legal threat, to enable comparison with the legal advice referred to in (i) above.
- (iii) An affiliated body should take no action to defend or settle, until approved by AFL Victoria Country administration and no party shall purport to act for or bind AFL Victoria Country, except where a person is specifically authorised in writing, to do so.
- (iv) This procedure is not applicable for action which does not involve or relate to the Rules & Regulations of AFL Victoria Country as applicable to affiliated bodies.

The objective of implementing this procedure is to protect AFL Victoria Country Rules from unnecessary challenge by ensuring that the best and expert legal advice is available to concerned parties at all times.

AFL Victoria Country's policy of not financing Club and League legal defences will continue to apply unless this procedure is followed and AFL Victoria Country agrees to support action, prior to its implementation.

APPENDIX 1 - SUGGESTED LEAGUE INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL “RUNNING SHEET”

1. CHAIRMAN

This session of the Football League’s Independent Tribunal is now open.

Mr. Secretary, would you make the introductions.

2. SECRETARY

The Chairman for this hearing is

The Panel Members are

and

The reported player is

His advocate is

The offended player is

The reporting umpire is

Their advocate is

3. CHAIRMAN

Are you player number of
..... Football Club, the reported player?

Are you umpire the officiating and reporting umpire. Ask the Umpire advocate; Does the umpire wish to make any amendments to the report?

4. CHAIRMAN

Would the offended player and all witnesses please vacate the room until called.

5. CHAIRMAN

Reads umpires report sheet.

Asks player’s advocate – do you object to any member of the Tribunal hearing this matter or the report.

6. CHAIRMAN

Player number of
you have heard the charge. How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?

7. PLAYER

Responds.

8. CHAIRMAN

Umpire
would you please enlarge on your written report.

9. UMPIRE

Responds.

10. CHAIRMAN

Asks questions of the umpire, then asks the other panel members if they have any questions of the umpire. The charged player’s advocate is then asked if they have any questions of the umpire.

(Order for Questions) Chairman and Panel.

Umpire’s Advocate. Charged Player’s Advocate.

11. CHAIRMAN

Asks Secretary to admit the offended player.

12. CHAIRMAN

Player number of
would you give the tribunal your version of why you think the umpire reported player number

..... of

13. PLAYER

Responds.

14. CHAIRMAN

Any questions of the offended player:

Chairman and Panel. Umpire’s Advocate.

Charged Player’s Advocate.

15. CHAIRMAN

Asks the charged player:

Are you player number of
would you give your version of the reported incident.

16. PLAYER

Responds.

17. CHAIRMAN

Any questions of the charged player:

Chairman and Panel. Charged Player’s Advocate.

Umpire’s Advocate.

18. CHAIRMAN

Ask for any witnesses to be called and may be questioned by all parties. Offended against player’s witnesses to be called before any witnesses for the charged player.

The Independent Tribunal should carefully consider the status and independence of witnesses giving evidence when assessing the weighting of the credibility of the evidence given.

19. CHAIRMAN

Asks for parties if they have any more questions of anyone.

20. CHAIRMAN

To ensure natural justice to all parties concerned, you are reminded of Rule 8.3 of AFL Victoria Country Handbook.

21. CHAIRMAN

Reads AFL Victoria Country Rule 8.3.

22. CHAIRMAN

Asks if all parties are satisfied that all the available evidence has been presented to the tribunal.

23. Asks for summing up by:

Prosecuting Advocate.
Advocate for charged player.

24. CHAIRMAN

Asks all parties, including tribunal secretary, to vacate the room.

25. * * *

Panel considers evidence and having reached a verdict asks all parties to resume.

26. CHAIRMAN

Player of
would you stand.

27. CHAIRMAN

We have carefully considered the evidence as presented and find you
as charged. (Guilty or Not Guilty).

28. CHAIRMAN

If found guilty: Advocate for the charged player, do you wish to enter a plea on behalf of your player?

29. ADVOCATE

Responds.

30. CHAIRMAN

Asks Tribunal Secretary for the guilty player's tribunal record.

31. CHAIRMAN

Asks all parties, including the tribunal secretary, to vacate the room.

32. CHAIRMAN

Recalls all parties. The penalty decided on is (matches in which your club plays for premiership points or other penalty as determined by the tribunal within their powers).

The Chairman should be aware that this procedure applies also to players on permit as per AFL Victoria Country Rule 2.1.

The Chairman should also refer to Rule 8, 7.1.1.

33. CHAIRMAN

This case is now closed and I thank you for your attendance.

Guidelines for Player Advocates

Role of a players advocate.

Guidelines to assist with preparation and presentation of a case before tribunal hearings.

The following notes are intended solely as a practical guide to tribunal hearings in general and are not to be construed as laws to follow. For further and more detailed information a study of laws of the game and available text books is recommended.

Players Advocate:

Duties:

It has been suggested that every advocate has a duty to the following:

Case Preparation

- (i) Preparation
- (ii) Presentation
- (iii) Evidence to be led
- (iv) Summary

Preparation

The successful advocate will begin his preparation long before he is to appear before the tribunal, in fact he has a duty to prepare himself, generally by studying the various documents in his possession and by endeavouring to gain a good knowledge of relevant statements.

In addition he must:

Know his brief. His Player/witness.

In relation to the brief, consider the following matters:

- (1) Is the proper date on charge sheet.
- (2) Is the charge properly laid.
- (3) Is there a more appropriate charge.
- (4) Are all your witnesses available.
- (5) Are they listed to be called in the most advantageous order.

Study

Read the laws of the game, know what is required of umpires when making reports, this is necessary if you are to do justice to yourself and the player/club you are representing.

Consider the Witnesses

Meet them before the case, put them at ease; see if they are nervous by their attendance at the tribunal.

See if you can alleviate this.

Do not call witnesses in illogical sequence to the detriment of your case.

Presentation

In presenting your case you should pay attention to the following matters:

Dress appropriately. Be alert, Speak clearly, concisely. Don't mumble.

"Stand up – speak up – wake up" your bearings and manner or speech will have a marked effect on your success as an advocate, try to appear confident, speak loudly, clearly, and conduct yourself with dignity. At all times remain alert, take notes observe everything said and done by others. Take notes of everything said including what the chairman says, when delivering his penalty.

Appearance at Tribunal

"Be respectful always". This cannot be stressed too often, as we frequently find heated arguments developing in tribunals. It matters not that others become heated, the advocate must at all times keep his emotions in check.

Should you or your witness be criticised by the tribunal do not allow yourself to be provoked in making remarks you may regret later.

However, tact and discretion should remove any cause for unpleasantness and your bearing, manner and behaviour will have a marked impression on those on the tribunal so “be respectful always”.

Evidence

Introduction

Under the AFL Victoria Country system, the onus is on the umpire / league representative to prove the guilt of the player. The proof of a charge against any player can be established only by the production of evidence in support of the charge.

In discharging the burden of proof, only that evidence which is logically relevant to the facts in issue may be introduced. Evidence can be given orally, only by witnesses who are competent.

A plea of guilty is an admission of the truth of the charge, but not necessarily of the truth of the evidence in support of it. Sustained questioning on the facts may illicit provocation, or other elements to be considered by the tribunal when determining penalty.

Nature of Evidence

As a general proposition it can be said that evidence consists of:

Facts, Testimony, Documents and Physical Exhibits which may be admitted in order to prove or disprove the facts under inquiry.

Sources of Evidence

The following are the sources from which the advocate may obtain evidence to rebut the charge:

- (i) Examination of charge sheets.
- (ii) Interview of player/witness.
- (iii) Information received from club officials, members of public, officials at game.

Charge Sheet

Your most important document. Read it line by line looking for mistakes.

Check List: Correct date? Correct charge? Is it signed by umpire? Right player named? Right player number? Right clubs named? What quarter incident?

Every document tells a story, it is to your advantage, don't take for granted that it will be right.

Documentary Evidence

If a photograph or a medical report is tendered at the hearing by someone other than the photographer or medical practitioner then the Tribunal must satisfy itself that such photograph or report is valid. Eg Have the photographer available if needs be, have the medical report provided on letter head.

Video Evidence

- (1) The tribunal and or Area Appeals Committee should admit video evidence if such evidence is available.

- (2) The club and umpire who intends to rely on the video evidence must provide a copy of such evidence to the league secretary at least 24hrs prior to the hearing.
- (3) At the hearing the league secretary must provide opportunity for all interested parties to view the video evidence prior to the commencement of the hearing.
- (4) It shall be a condition of admissibility of the video evidence that the club and umpire shall make available the person who recorded the video of the incident for examination by the tribunal and any interested party.
- (5) Subsequent to the viewing of video evidence but prior to the commencement of the hearing, the reporting official may elect to withdraw the report.

Evaluating the Evidence

- (a) Consider the charge(s) laid or possible charge(s) arising from the allegation being heard.
- (b) Analyse the charge(s) to establish the proofs which have to be satisfied to sustain this charge(s).
- (c) Consider what evidence is available and what must be sought to satisfy those proofs.
- (d) Determine what evidence we have available for cross- examination of umpire witnesses.

Qualities required of a Witness

- (1) He must have seen or heard something.
- (2) He must be able to remember what he said or heard.
- (3) He must have a degree of moral sense in that he must understand the duty of telling the truth; otherwise his evidence is valueless.

Appreciation of a Witness's Evidence

Memory is based on the ability to:

- (a) Observe
- (b) Retain what is observed
- (c) Recall what has been retained

The power of memory varies from person to person and in accordance with the circumstances under which the observation was made. There are occasions when a person makes a conscious effort at controlled visualisation and other occasions when the mind is free wheeling and the observation is not recorded.

A witness may have observed an incident for a few fleeting seconds and has the ability to recall the event in accurate detail which will depend on a number of factors.

Weather – fine – raining. Distance from incident.

Obstructions, blocked view, etc.

The purpose of questioning is to try and demonstrate to the tribunal that the witness fails to satisfy one or more of these demands, that is to cast a doubt on his evidence.

Questioning of Witnesses

Basic Questioning

In any hearing, the advocate seeks the answers to questions concerning the matter under inquiry. If all of the right questions are asked, at least some of the right answers will be obtained. If none of the right questions are asked none of the right answers will be forthcoming.

Basic questions are: What? When? Where? How?

Extensions of the above are

What

What happened, what was the motive? What height, weight, build?

When

When did the incident occur? When did you observe it? When did you decide to report it?

Where

Where did the incident occur? Where were you/ distance/vision? Where were the players?

Where were the other umpires?

How

How did it happen/describe?

The art of questioning can only be developed from long experience and practice, however, if the average advocate observes a few rules we can achieve a fair standard of efficiency. The basis of good questioning is simple.

Know what you want – when you get it sit down.

The effect of many good questions diminishes greatly if, after asking them, you then pottter along with a series of ineffective questions which, perhaps weary and even irritate the tribunal/chairman.

When Questioning

- (1) Be brief.
- (2) Never ask a question to which you do not already know the answer.
- (3) Listen to the answer.
- (4) Do not quarrel with the witness.
- (5) Avoid one question too many.

Warning

Never take anyone's word as to the contents of a written exhibit or as to the appearance of that exhibit.

Examine all exhibits yourself, it is your responsibility.

Through research and self application advocates can develop the proper attitude and skills necessary to prepare notes and a brief to present before a tribunal with confidence and competence.

APPENDIX 2 - RECOMMENDED ROLE AND PROCEDURE OF INVESTIGATION OFFICER

1. The Investigation Officer is instructed by the League Secretary to investigate the matter. The League Secretary supplies all relevant details regarding the alleged incident.
2. The Investigation Officer views video of alleged incident (if available).
3. The Investigation Officer interviews all witnesses (players, umpires, officials, spectators) pertaining to the matter taking a written copy of the interview. It is recommended that the interview be conducted in Question and Answer format.
 For example:
 Investigation Officer: Are you player (name)
 the wearer of number of
 Club)
 who played in game (Club)
 vs (Club)
 on (date)
 at (Venue)
 (can be modified for non-player witnesses).
 Player/Official/Other: Responds.
 Investigation Officer: It has been alleged that
 (description of alleged incident). What did you see of the alleged incident?
 Player/Official/Other: Responds.
 Investigation Officer: Asks further questions relevant to the alleged incident in order to obtain as much detail as possible.
 At conclusion of interview Investigation Officer reads a copy of the interview to the witness who agrees to content of interview and signs copy of interview.
4. The Investigation Officer submits all correspondence relating to the matter to the League Secretary with a recommendation as to whether the matter should be dealt with by the League Independent Tribunal. In the conduct of the investigation and in making the recommendation the Investigation Officer should have an open mind with any doubt regarding the events of the incident being considered in favour of the investigated player or official.
5. Proforma Notice from Investigation Officer to League

The following example of a notice from an Investigation Officer to a league is recommended for use by Investigation Officers when recommending charges be laid following an investigation per AFL Victoria Country Rule 5.2.

The notice would obviously have to be changed for each investigation although its general wording and presentation is recommended.

The Secretary
 Football League
 Date:

1. On (date),
 I received notification from the Football League requesting an investigation be conducted, per AFL Victoria Country Rule 5.2, into an incident that allegedly took place between player X of (club) and player Y of (club).
2. The incident referred to by the
 Football Club
 (reporting clubs) relates to the quarter
 of the senior grade match between the two clubs on Saturday (date) played at the oval.
 The (club)
 alleges that their player Y was struck by player X.
3. On the night of (date),
 I spoke to the victim, other players, officials and spectators at venue)
 I have taken statements from the following:
 names).
4. On the night of (date)
 I attended at and interviewed player X together with witness name).
 Earlier in the day I had taken a statement from
 (club) player
(name).
5. All parties agree on the fact that Player X struck Player Y. It was not in a contest for the ball, in fact play may have been at least 40 metres away. It appears the incident happened some distance behind play (more details of the incident can be supplied if desired).

6a. After making enquires into this incident, it is my opinion that Player X may have a charge to answer per AFL Victoria Country Rule 5.0 of Unbecoming Conduct, and therefore recommend that he be called before the League Independent Tribunal to answer that charge of unbecoming conduct in that he

6b. After making inquiries into this incident it is my opinion that Player X does not have to answer any charge and recommend no further action is necessary.

7. I have retained possession of all original signed documents in this matter. This report is forwarded to the league for action by the League Executive.

..... (signed)

..... (date)

.....

League Investigation Officer.

8. In any proceeding brought before a tribunal under this rule the Investigation Officer shall personally appear before it and lay the necessary charge or charges and be prepared to be questioned about the Report he prepared on behalf of the League or Association.

APPENDIX 3 - LEAGUE CHARGE SHEET RESULTING FROM AN INVESTIGATION

Date:.....

Player:.....

Club:.....

Address:.....

As a result of an investigation into an alleged incident occurring during the quarter of the match between Football Club and Football Club played at on the day of YOU ARE HEREBY CHARGED with conduct which is unbecoming to a player in that you [No and name of offended against player of the FC during the quarter of the match between FC and FC

Or

conduct which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute in that you [No and name of the offended against player of the FC during the quarter of the match between FC and FC.

YOU ARE THEREFORE REQUIRED TO APPEAR before the Football League Independent Tribunal on the day of at pm at its offices at TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING CHARGE(S):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The following witnesses will be called by the Football League/Association to give evidence:
.....
.....

Also please find attached a copy of the Investigators report for your attention.

Secretary
FOOTBALL LEAGUE/ASSOCIATION

APPENDIX 4 – NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION (LEAGUE TO SEND TO CLUBS)

Date:.....

Mr.

.....

..... FNC

By email:

Dear,

Re: Notice of Investigation

Notice is given under AFL Victoria Country rule 5.2 of an investigation to be completed by an appointed WorkSafe AFL Victoria Country Investigation officer concerning the allegation thatFNC player during the quarter of the(senior / under18) match v on Saturday 20....

The allegation is that player

.....

.....

This investigation will be conducted according to the procedures as set down within AFL Victoria Country regulation 5.2 with a report to be provided back to theF.L. by the appointed investigation officer within 10 business days of his engagement on 20....

To enable the investigation to proceed in a timely manner FNC is requested to provide the FL secretary with a list of all video footage (if available), player number, and any witnesses who viewed any relevant incidents which it wishes to have interviewed.

In the case of persons under 18 years of age being involved in the investigation AFL Victoria Country rules permits them to have an adult present with them during the course of the interview if that is so required.

The list of witnesses and other information which the FNC wishes to have viewed and heard during the investigation is to be provided in writing (by email) to theFL secretary / Operations Manager by 12.00 noon on 20....

..... FNC will then be contacted by the investigation officer to arrange for the interviews to take place. It is expected that this will be able to occur later during the week commencing 20...

If the investigation report finds that any person or persons is deemed to have a case to answer under AFL Victoria Country regulation 5.2 in relation to the request for investigation the case will be taken to theFL Independent Tribunal within 9 days of the receipt of the report.

Yours truly,

.....
FL Secretary / Operations Manager

- Cc: – AFL Victoria Country Investigation Officer
..... – FL President
..... – President FNC
..... – WorkSafe AFL Victoria Football Development Manager



SPEED UP ON THE FIELD. SLOW DOWN ON THE ROAD.

You can speed things up on the field. But out on the road, driving at a safe and legal speed could save the life of a club or community member. So whether you're a player, coach, spectator or volunteer, we're asking you to slow down and help make our roads safer.

It takes all of us.



Club Rewards Program



Scan to learn more
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